MOKUMOKUREN

4

THE SUMMER HIKARU DIED

BLOOD-STAINS BE GONE

POWERFUL Clean

MAYBE THIS'LL GET THE STAINS OUT...

CHAPTER 17

.....

AWFUL LOTTA BLOOD.

THE SUMMER

HIKARU DIED

MOKUMOKUREN

4

CHAPTER 17

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PHEW ...

IT'S LIKE WE'RE COVERIN' UP A MURDER, HUH?

WE GOTTA CLEAN ALL THIS 'FORE MY MOM COMES HOME.

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS GETTIN' THE BLOOD OUTTA THESE CLOTHES.

FSHHH...

SO...

...HOW'S YER WOUND DOIN'?

SQUIK

SPLISH

SPLASH

YEAH... FEELS THAT WAY.

FIGURED I'D FIX IT UP.

OH, THANKS FOR THE CHANGE OF CLOTHES.

"FIX" ...?

IT'S HEALED...

BUT IF IT'S SOMETHIN' THAT STOPS ME FROM MOVIN', I GOTTA FIX MYSELF UP, Y'KNOW?

I DON'T FEEL MUCH IN THE WAY OF PAIN, SO I'LL LEAVE SMALL CUTS AN' BRUISES ALONE.

...SO MY LAST-DITCH ATTACK WAS ALL FOR NOTHIN', HUH?

THERE'S SOMETHIN' I WANT YA TO SEE...

HEY.

YEAH.

A NOTE THE REAL HIKARU WROTE BEFORE?

.....

YA GOT HIS MEMORIES, DON'CHA? THAT NOTE MAKE ANY SENSE?

OLD LADY MATSUURA... SHE MENTIONED THAT NAME TOO.

HMM...

WELL, THING IS...

...I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHIN' 'BOUT THIS.

...IF HIKARU WROTE IT, I SHOULD REMEMBER IT...

...BUT MY MEMORY'S ALL FUZZY...

...IS ME?

MAYBE THAT "NOUNUKI-SAMA" FELLER...

THIS ROOM'S A MESS, BY THE WAY...

IS IT?

NEWBORN

THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' ELSE IN HIS HOME NEITHER...

THERE'S NOTHIN' HERE.

NOTHIN' ABOUT *YOU*...

...

I THINK IT WAS S'POSED TO BE A CAT.

HIKARU MADE THIS IN ELE-MENTARY SCHOOL!

OH!

ガラ RATTLE

ガラ RATTLE

ガラ RATTLE

...MAYBE HIKARU'S GRANDPA KNOWS SOMETHIN'.

IT'S GRANDPA.

THIS IS 'ROUND 'BOUT WHEN HE GETS BACK FROM THE MUSHROOM FARM.

HEY, GRANDPA ...

MM? WHAT IS IT?

OOF...

HE'S GOIN' SENILE, SO I'M NOT SURE WHAT HE SAYS'LL MAKE MUCH SENSE...

Hichi

HMM?
SO, I GOT THIS NOTE...

AH YEAH...
HIKA-RU.
WHERE'D HICHI-SAN GO?

HUH?
HI—

...THAT FELLER...

WHAT'S HICHI-SAN? A PERSON?

HE AIN'T AT THE SHRINE.

GOTTA RETURN 'IM TO THE MOUNTAINS...

...THIS VILLAGE'S ...

GRAVE SIN

EVER SINCE

IF ONLY HE HADN'T GONE AN' ASKED UNUKI-SAMA FOR ALL THAT...

WAY BACK WHEN ...

...WAS A POOR SOUL...

HEY.

I THINK HE'S 'BOUT TO DRIFT OFF TO THE HEAVENS.

SNAP

HIKARU.

GO AN' FETCH THE SHIITAKE FROM OUT FRONT.

HUH?

GRAND-PA...

...WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF YER STORY?

YO-SHIKI?

ACK!

YEP, SURE HAVE.

WELL, IF IT AIN'T YOSHIKI. MY, YOU'VE GROWN!

WHAT'S THAT...?

HIKARU'S MOMMA AND GRANNY DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' NEITHER.

DIDN'T GET MUCH OF ANYWHERE WITH THAT.

SO IT MUST BE SOMETHIN' ONLY THE MEN IN THE INDOU FAMILY DO...

HIKARU'S DADDY DID SOMETHIN' OUT IN THOSE MOUNTAINS.

MAYBE SOMETHIN' YER FAMILY'S DONE FOR GENERATIONS?

YEAH.

HIKARU'S GRANDPA SAID SOMETHIN' ABOUT "RETURNIN' IT TO THE MOUNTAINS" TOO...

AND THAT'S WHAT HIKARU WAS DOIN' IN THE MOUN-TAINS...

THERE'S SOMETHIN' I WANTED TO SHOW YA.

AH!

OH YEAH!

BARK BULLETIN (ᵘ•ᴗ•ᵘ)

◆ "Post places with disturbing names" Thread Roundup

09/25/2007 Comments (10)

Previous Article | Next Article

1: Really Unsettling Anonymous 08/31/2007 (Fri) 18:00:14:22
Please

2: Really Unsettling Anonymous 08/31/2007 (Fri) 18:01:30:47
Not the obvious ones tho

A ROUNDUP OF BULLETIN BOARD THREADS?

"POST PLACES WITH DISTURBING NAMES."

IT'S RIGHT UP IN MY FACE.

CHECK IT OUT!

15: Really Unsettling Anonymous 08/31/2007 (Fri) 18:05:30:01
There's a place called Kibogayama (Hope Mountain) around XX in XX Prefecture, but the names of the settlements around it all have body parts in them. It's creepy.

17: Really Unsettling Anonymous 08/31/2007 (Fri) 19:40:38:22
>>15
Deets plz

18: Really Unsettling Anonymous 08/31/2007 (Fri) 19:45:12:50

From top to bottom, there's Kubitachi (Head-stand), Udetori (Arm-take), and Ashidori (Leg-take). There's a town called Kibogayama (Hope Mountain) in the center, but even that one's weird. It's so unnatural it's actually unsettling

19: Really Unsettling Anonymous 08/31/2007 (Fri) 19:50:20:12
Places with "hope" in their name tend to be bad news. Something dangerous must've happened there, and it got an unlucky name. But they couldn't sell land like that, so they changed the name at some point. I bet that's what happened.

20: Really Unsettling Anonymous 08/31/2007 (Fri) 20:01:30:56
The place where I live has a pretty crazy name.
It's called Boukijanousaiakutan!
(Violent-ogre-snake-crumble-worst-valley)

...GUESS WE BETTER HEAD TO THE LIBRARY TOMORROW AN' LOOK INTO THIS "KUBITACHI" STUFF...

CONVERSATION STOPS AFTER THAT...

...BUT OUR HOMETOWN'S NAME *IS* WEIRD. THAT'S FOR SURE.

MAYBE IT'S A CLUE TO THAT THING'S TRUE IDENTITY...

WHAT WAS THE "VILLAGE'S SIN" THAT HIKARU'S GRANDPA MENTIONED?

CAW...

CAW...

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

JOLT

AH!!

...HE SAID HE FORGOT SOMETHIN' AND HASN'T COME BACK.

MAYBE I SHOULD GO ON AHEAD TO THE LIBRARY

YA MISSED SCHOOL YESTERDAY... BUT I GUESS YER FEELIN' ALL RIGHT TODAY?

UM .

YEAH, I'M...

AH HA HA!

AH HA!

ACTU-ALLY...

ER...

NAH.

...YOU OKAY? AFTER ALL THAT...

I'M FINE.

...SINCE THEN, I'VE HAD TROUBLE HEARIN' OUTTA MY RIGHT EAR...

EVEN MY DOCTOR DOESN'T KNOW WHY.

WONDER WHAT IT COULD BE...

...OH...

.. I'M SORRY.

UM... BUT...

...HIKARU WAS ACTIN' REAL FUNNY BACK THERE... WASN'T HE?

WHAT'RE YA APOLOGIZIN' FOR, YOSHIKI?

AIN'T NO ONE'S FAULT.

THINKIN' BACK, THERE'S BEEN ALL SORTS OF WEIRD THINGS ABOUT 'IM, AN'—

...IF...

ALMOST LIKE...HE WASN'T HIKARU.

MAYBE IT TOOK OVER HIKARU'S BODY.

THAT EVIL SPIRIT I WAS TALKIN' ABOUT...

IF THAT WERE TRUE...

...WOULD YA HATE 'IM?

HUH?

A-ARE YOU BEIN' SERIOUS ...?

JUST... DON'T HATE 'IM TOO MUCH, ALL RIGHT?

...HUH?

I-I DUNNO...

...NAH.

JUST FOOLIN'.

YOSHIKI ...?

BOOM

SEE YA!

A—

ANY-WAY!

IF THERE'S ANY TROUBLE... I'M HERE TO HELP!

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN!!

SORRY. GOT HELD UP.

THAT ...

SOUNDS LIKE...

...ASAKO CAN'T HEAR ALL TOO GOOD FROM HER RIGHT EAR NOW.

...THING WITH HUMANS IS, THEY BREAK WHEN I MESS WITH 'EM.

THEY START SEEIN' JUNK AND DYIN' WHEN I TOUCH 'EM.

...MIGHT BE 'COS I TAPPED IT.

THAT'S MY GUESS.

...MAYBE IT JUST AFFECTED HER HEARIN'...

...SO INSTEAD OF BREAKIN' ...

BUT ASAKO'S GOT A STRONG MIND...

HAAH ..

YOU DON'T FEEL A THING, DO YA?

YER THE ONE WHO DID IT, THOUGH.

GOOD THING IT WAS JUST HER EAR. COULDA BEEN WORSE... I THINK.

...LET'S GO TO THE LIBRARY.

'KAY.

...CAN WE?

WE CAN'T KEEP THIS A SECRET FOREVER...

AWFUL LOTTA BOOKS HERE.

WE'RE LOOKIN' FOR MAPS. OLD ONES.

HERE WE ARE... THIS ONE'S FROM THE EARLY MEIJI ERA.

IT'S A MAP FROM THE LATE 1800s.

MM. IT IS
THIS HERE'S MOUNT TENBAN.
AND IF THE SHRINE'S HERE, THEN RIGHT HERE'S...
K'BOGA-YAMA
AIN'T ON HERE
...*DARU-MASUTE*?
MM
READ IT FROM THE RIGHT
SUTE. ? WHA ?

拾广连

...WE COULD LINE IT UP WITH OTHER MAPS.

THEY SHOULD ALSO HAVE MAPS OF KUBITACHI AN' OTHER PLACES IN THE AREA.

DARUMA-SUTE?

THE HECK KINDA NAME IS THAT?

WAS KIBOGA-YAMA REALLY CALLED THAT?

UDEKARI.

ASHIDORI.

THOSE PLACES HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH.

DARUMA-SUTE.

THE LAND STRETCHED OUT LENGTH-WISE BELOW IT.

BUT THAT DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE.

KUBITACHI.

...BUT IT'S SPELLED ALL DIFFERENT FROM HOW IT'S WRITTEN NOW.

UDEIRI.

THAT PLACE IS A GHOST TOWN NOW.

...

IT LOOKS LIKE...

...A PERSON?

HUH?

THE NAME IS MATCHED UP WITH HUMAN BODY PARTS...

THE ARM IS "UDEGANE" THE HEAD IS "KUBI" TAMA"

AND I GUESS "DARUMA" IS THE TORSO?

UM...

THAT'S SOOOO... CREEPY!!

DANG! NO WAY!

YER SPEAKIN' A LITTLE LOUD
AHH!
OH!
...IS THIS FOR A SCHOOL ASSIGN-MENT?
AND WE'RE REMEMBER-ING OUR HOME-TOWN...
WE'RE FROM KUBITACHI AND GO TO YAMA HIGH...
.OR SOME-THING LIKE THAT.

OH MY...

I HAPPEN TO BE FROM KUBITACHI TOO.

PFT!

HE GETS LIKE THIS AT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF TROUBLE.

NO, I DON'T THINK SO...MY MOMMA PASSED AWAY RECENTLY, AND I'VE JUST BEEN BACK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWENTY YEARS...

REALLY...? THEN MAYBE WE MET YOU WHEN WE WERE LITTLE.

HUH?

OH WOW.

AH!

"PASSED AWAY RECENTLY"...?

MATSUURA

...MATSUURA-SAN'S DAUGHTER?

WAIT, ARE YOU—

CHAPTER 17 END

AH...
THE
HOLE...
HE WOUND
UP
SECRETLY
THROWING
IT AWAY

YOSHIKI CAN'T HANDLE GETTING IN TROUBLE WITH PEOPLE
IT SEEMS TO REALLY SHOCK HIM, SINCE HE'S USUALLY SO PROPER ABOUT THINGS.
"HIKARU" (AND THE REAL HIKARU) ARE UNFAZED.
SORRY
UH
AH

CHAPTER 18

...

YES... THAT'S RIGHT.

SHE'S MY MOMMA...

BUT SHE WOUND UP DYING BEFORE I COULD SEE HER...

MY CONDO-LENCES...

SO YOU'RE LOOKING INTO THE HISTORY OF KUBITACHI, ARE YOU?

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

HUH ?

DICTIONARY OF JAPANESE PLACE-NAMES

THE UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY OF JAPANESE PLACE-NAMES...

*KUBITACHI VILLAGE: VILLAGE LOCATED IN ○○ PREFECTURE. INITIALLY PART OF . . DOMAIN, AND THEN PART OF ○◇ DOMAIN FROM 1607.

IN 1749, THE VILLAGE SUFFERED A SEVERE FAMINE AND EPIDEMIC, LEADING TO NUMEROUS DEATHS AND NEARLY CAUSING ITS ABANDONMENT. HOWEVER, THE POPULATION GRADUALLY RECOVERED AND CONTINUES ON TO THIS DAY...

*DURING THE MID-MEIJI ERA, UDEIRI MERGED WITH DARUMASUTE.

*ORIGINALLY A SINGLE VILLAGE, IT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN SUBDIVIDED INTO SEPARATE VILLAGES DURING THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1700s), INCLUDING KUBITACHI ('HEAD-SEVER'), UDEKARI ('ARM-CUT'), UDEIRI ('ARM-ENTER'), ASHIDORI ('LEG-TAKE'), AND DARUMASUTE ('DHARMA-DOLL-DISCARD'— CURRENTLY 'KIBOGAYAMA').

IT USED TO BE ONE VILLAGE...

KIBOGAYAMA... KUBITACHI, ALL OF IT.

...HUH ...?

IT'S SO LONG

FOLKS IN KUBITACHI DON'T REALLY LIKE TALKING TO YOUNGUNS ABOUT VILLAGE HISTORY...

SEEMS LIKE THE MASS DEATHS WERE QUITE THE INCIDENT BACK THEN.

I SORTA KNEW THAT KUBITACHI ALMOST BECAME A GHOST TOWN ON ACCOUNT OF ALL OF THEM DYING...

...BUT I HAD NO IDEA ABOUT THIS STUFF. EVEN THOUGH IT'S MY OWN VILLAGE AN' ALL.

UM...

MATSU-URA-SAN?

YES?

...BUT IN THE END THEY ATTRIBUTED THE DEATHS TO FAMINE AND DISEASE...

A LOT OF PEOPLE DIED IN STRANGE WAYS...

YOU KNOW ABOUT NOUNUKI-SAMA?

...!

...DID MY MOMMA MENTION IT?

.....

GOSH CAN'T BELIEVE THAT'S STILL A THING.

...

LET'S GO SOMEWHERE ELSE TO TALK ABOUT IT.

YEAH.

WE'RE TRYIN' TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT IS...

IT WAS REAL BIZARRE.

MY MOMMA WOULD ALWAYS GO ON ABOUT "NOUNUKI-SAMA."

...THEN... NOUNUKI-SAMA MUST BE SOME SORTA GHOULIE WHO LIVES UP THERE.

SO SHE ALWAYS TAUGHT US NEVER TO GO INTO THOSE MOUNTAINS.

APPARENTLY, SHE SNUCK INTO THE MOUNTAINS AS A CHILD AND EXPERIENCED SOMETHING DOWNRIGHT TERRIFYIN'.

AND IT'S BEEN THERE SINCE BEFORE THE VILLAGE SPLIT...

NO... IT'S MORE LIKE...A GOD.

"SPECIFIC OFFER-INGS"?

WELL...I DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS OFFERED, EXACTLY.

NOUNUKI-SAMA'S A GOD THAT LIVES IN THE MOUNTAINS.

"WAS"? SO YOU MEAN...

...IT'S NOT LIKE THAT ANYMORE?

PEOPLE SAY... IT WOULD BRING BENEFITS IN EXCHANGE FOR SPECIFIC OFFERINGS.

AFTER ONE PARTICULARLY DEVASTATING FAMINE...

...IT BECAME A CURSED GOD.

THAT'S RIGHT.

I THINK SO.

AND THAT FAMINE...WAS THAT THE "MASS DEATH INCIDENT" MENTIONED IN THE DICTIONARY?

SINCE THEN, NOUNUKI-SAMA...

...STOPPED COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

THMP

THAT'S WHY MY MOMMA ALWAYS USED TO SAY...

...NOT TO GO UP IN THERE.

SHOVE

"FUNNY" —!?

DON'T SAY STUFF LIKE THAT...

NO.

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

SEEING IT'S THE TRUTH AND ALL...

HUH...

MATSUURA-SAN...DID YER MOMMA SEE NOUNUKI-SAMA?

THAT WHY SHE GOT ALL FUNNY IN THE HEAD?

...AFTER MY LITTLE SISTER DISAPPEARED IN THE MOUNTAINS. I THINK THAT WAS A BIG PART OF IT.

SHE GOT THAT WAY...

HUH?

THE WHOLE VILLAGE WAS IN AN UPROAR.

AND AFTER THAT...MY MOM WAS, WELL, YOU KNOW...

WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MY LITTLE SISTER WENT MISSING THERE...

...AND NEVER CAME BACK.

MAYBE SHE HAD A SIXTH SENSE? I DON'T KNOW...

SHE'D ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE KOOKY, THOUGH.

.. BUT WHO CAN SAY?

MY MOMMA AND SOME OF THE VILLAGE FOLK BELIEVED SO..

HUH?

WAIT.

SO WAS THAT MY— I MEAN, NOUNUKI-SAMA'S FAULT?

OH .. BUT .

...HAJIME-CHAN AND THE OTHERS SEEMED TO KNOW SOMETHING...

AND WE KIDS HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS GOING ON.

BACK THEN, NOUNUKI-SAMA WAS SOMETHIN' THE VILLAGE ELDERS WOULD GET ALL WORKED UP ABOUT.

RIGHT, RIGHT.

"HAJIME-CHAN"...

YOU MEAN MR. TAKEDA?

TAKEDA, MIKASA, AND MATSU-SHIMA...

WE GREW UP TOGETHER, JUST LIKE YOU TWO.

OHH I KNOW!

OLD MAN TAKEDA...

HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN FOREVER...

I ONLY INTERACTED WITH HIM A LITTLE WHEN I WAS SMALL..

HAJIME'S FATHER...

WHY DON'T YOU TRY ASKIN' OLD MAN TAKEDA?

HE'S AROUND MY MOMMA'S AGE, AN' ALL.

THANKS SO MUCH...

AND SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.

ESPECIALLY AFTER YOUR MOTHER JUST PASSED...

THE LIBRARY WILL BE CLOSING SOON.

.....

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

I... WASN'T VERY FRIENDLY WITH MY MOMMA.

BUT STILL...

...SHE WAS IMPORTANT TO ME.

I REALIZE THAT NOW...

FUNNY HOW THAT IS, HUH?

SMILE

GOOD LUCK...

...WITH YOUR RESEARCH.

FWUSH

キィ..
SQUEAK

CAW...

CAW...

...SO THE INDOUS WERE GOIN' INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO DO SOME SORTA RITUAL, RIGHT?

CAW...

...MOST LIKELY.

CAW...

AND...
NOUNUKI-SAMA BECAME A CURSED GOD...

...SO MAYBE THEY'VE BEEN PERFORMIN' A RITUAL TO TRAP IT UP IN THE MOUNTAINS.

...FEELS LIKE THAT.

AND MAYBE YOU CAME DOWN FROM THERE BECAUSE HIKARU FAILED AT THAT RITUAL...?

THAT COULD BE IT...

BUT THAT DON'T SEEM ENTIRELY RIGHT...

IT'S MORE LIKE...

I...

HEY...

DID I CAUSE ALL THEM DEATHS !?

WAIT, I WAS A CURSED GOD!?

WHAT? NO WAY!

...WHAT YOU DID TO MATSUURA-SAN?

DO YOU UNDER-STAND...

.....

ACTUALLY, I...DON'T UNDER-STAND...

COURSE :—

BACK AT THE LIBRARY, MATSUURA-SAN HAD A LOOK ON HER FACE THAT WAS JUST LIKE YOSHIKI'S...

I'M A FOOL... EVEN OLD LADY [illegible] HAD FAMILY. I GUESS SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY...

...I STOPPED TREATING HER SERIOUSLY.

'COS EVERY MORNIN' I WAKE UP AN' REALIZE MY DADDY AIN'T HERE.

...I HATE MORNIN'S.

...WHAT'RE YA APOLOGIZIN' FOR?

S SORRY...

...DEATH... CAN BE A LOT FOR PEOPLE...

BUT I—

NO USE APOLOGIZIN'.

YA DON'T KNOW WHAT YA DON'T KNOW, AFTER ALL...

...I'LL BEAR THAT SIN WITH YOU.

...IT'S OKAY.

EVEN IF YOU WIND UP KILLIN' SOMEONE ELSE AFTER THIS...

WHY?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO...

THANKS

AWW...

...THE CLEARER IT BECOMES THAT HE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T BE HERE

THE MORE I UNDERSTAND ABOUT HIKARU...

BUT I'M DONE LOOKING AWAY

TMP
TMP
FLAP

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZ
BZZH BZZH BZZH
NO CLUES ON THE MOUNTAIN
ROUNDING MOUN- TAINS.
BZZH BZZH BZZH

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

THAT'S MY GUESS.

AND THEY USED IT TO ENTER THE MOUNTAIN WHEN IT WAS DEFILED BY IMPURITIES...

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

THIS...

...IS WHAT THE INDOUS WERE USING FOR THEIR RITUAL.

18:30

Please contact me. It's urgent
Do not neglect your interim repor
-Satou

Message

VRR

Please contact me. It's urgent.
Do not neglect your interim report.
-Satou

Case AA-104
Continuing investigation.
No abnormalities detected.

TAP

WHAT A PAIN IN THE ASS.

...THIS COMPANY REALLY SUCKS.

THERE'S NO WAY I'M LETTING THEM HAVE THEIR WAY...

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

ZSH

ZSH

GETTIN' AN IMPORTANT PAPER MIXED UP IN MY BAG IS THE SAME THING HE USED TO DO.

IT'S SOME-THIN' HIKARU WOULD DO.

NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE...

HE'S TALL.

RATTLE

SQUEEAK!

SQUEE!

SHAKE

PAUSE

HEY, #10.

YOU FROM AROUND HERE?

CHAPTER 18 END

JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

HIKARU FORGOT HIS HOMEWORK THAT DAY AND CAUGHT FRESH HELL IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE CLASS. HE MADE THE EXCUSE THAT HE DID IT BUT LOST IT, AND THAT MADE EVERYONE LAUGH AT HIM EVEN MORE

CHAPTER 19

SKRSH

SKRSH

WHAT'S THE LOCAL SPECIALTY AROUND HERE?

HUH ...?

L- LOCAL SPE- CIALTY?

UH...

KREEREE

YEAH.

REEREEE

REEREEE

KREEREEREE

BUT I'M NOT A BIG FAN OF SHIITAKE, Y'KNOW?

DON'T THEY KINDA TASTE LIKE THEY'RE SOAKED IN SPIT?

YOU LIKE 'EM?

KREEREEREE

SH- SHIITAKE MUSH- ROOMS, I THINK...

AHH, THAT SO?

I'M A FOLKLORIST.

I'M HERE RESEARCHING THIS SETTLEMENT.

I DON'T HATE THEM, BUT

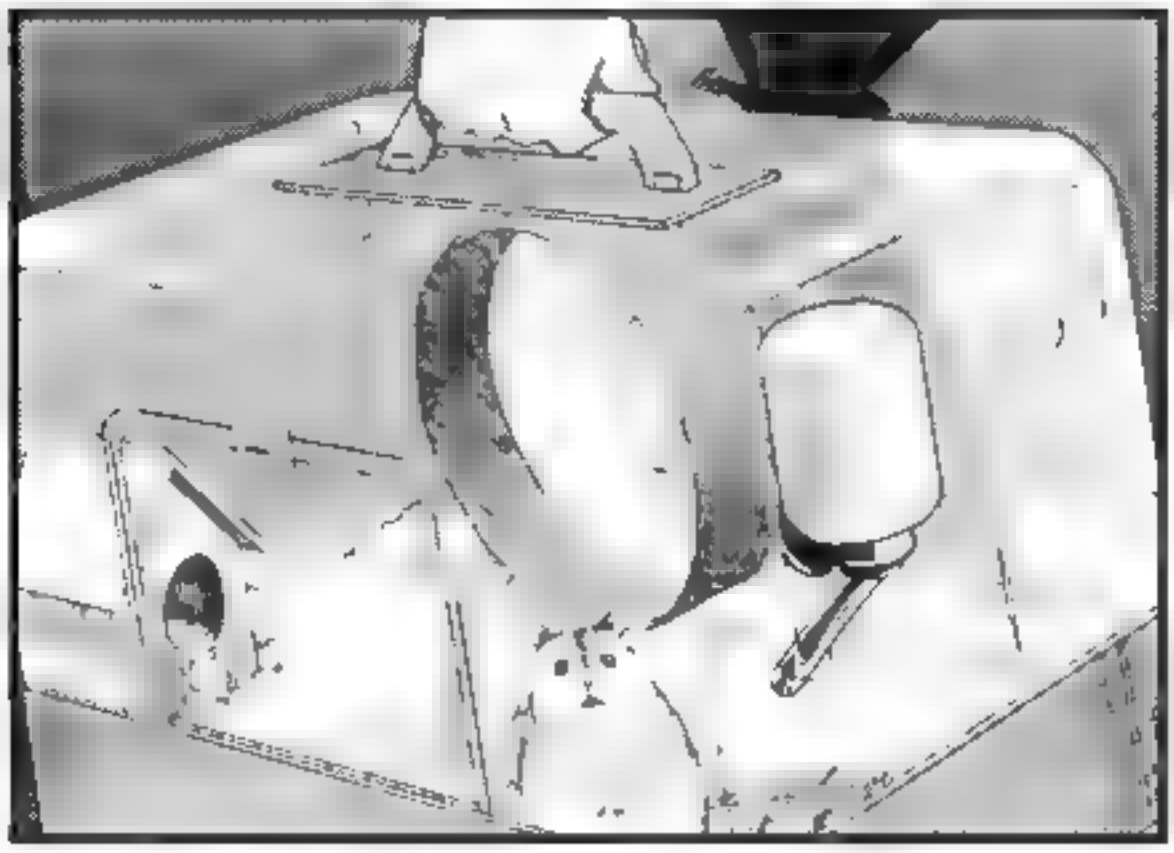
HUH ?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, KID?

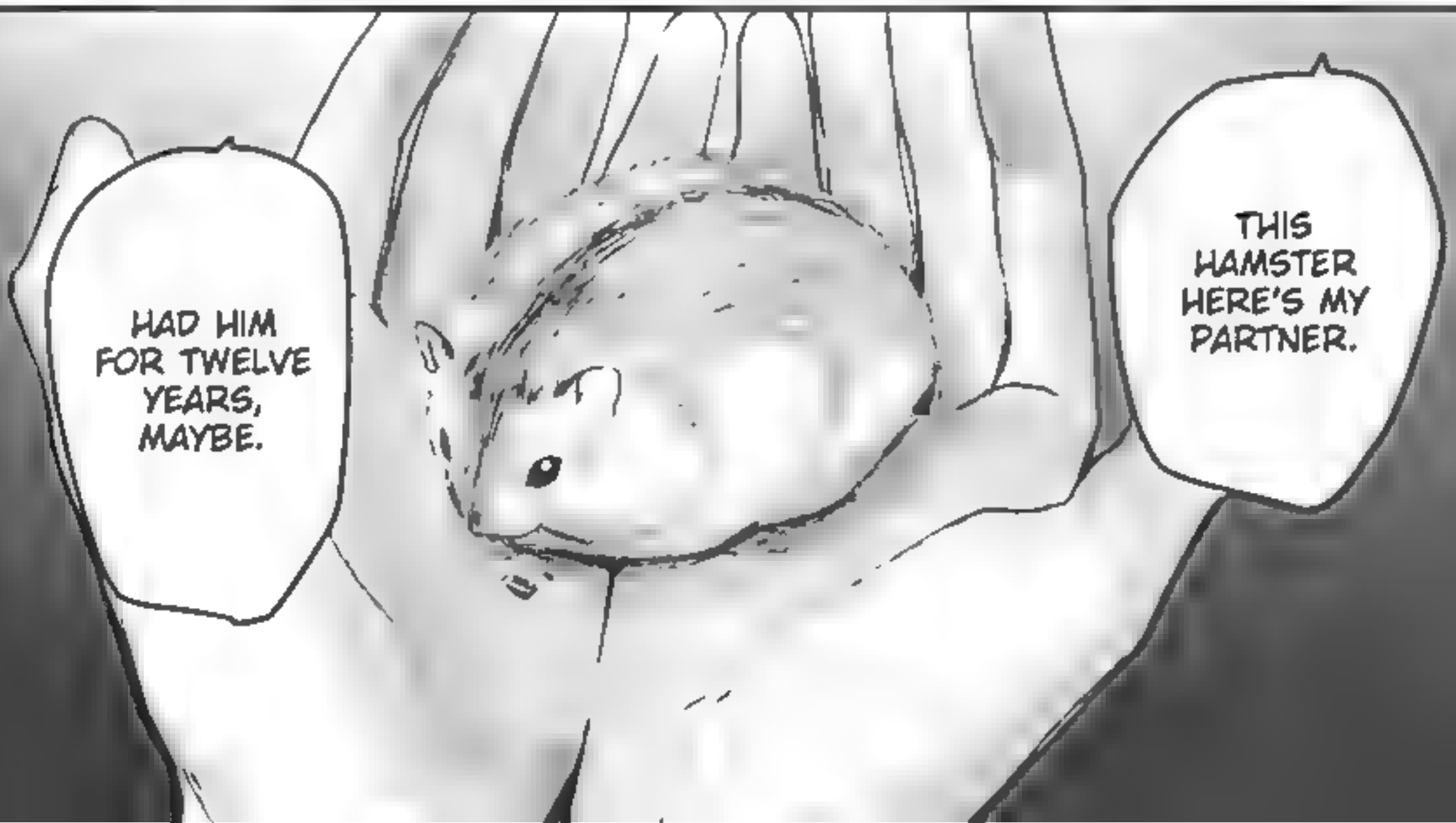
I'M STAYING AT THE MIKASAS' PLACE WHILE I'M HERE..

A FOLKLORIST...? HE AIN'T A YOUTUBER OR SOMETHIN'?

TSUJINAKA.. I LIVE RIGHT OVER THERE...



AHH...
I SEE.
WELL, TSUJI-NAKA-KUN. THANKS.
I'LL TRY EATING SOME WITHOUT BEING PICKY ABOUT IT.


HAD HIM FOR TWELVE YEARS, MAYBE.
THIS HAMSTER HERE'S MY PARTNER.

THIS GUY'S SPECIAL.

HE'S A GOBLIN HAMSTER.

WHAT... NO WAY...DON'T HAMSTERS ONLY LIVE FOR, LIKE, TWO OR THREE YEARS...?

...WELL, UH, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

OH, SORRY. HE POOPED ON YOU.

I MIGHT'VE MADE HIM NERVOUS. SORRY.

THOSE MARKS ON HIS ARM...

SHIFT

HEY, KID. YOU REMIND ME OF MYSELF, Y'KNOW?

WELL, SEE YOU AROUND.

.....

BUT HAVE I MET HIM SOMEWHERE BEFORE..!? MM, NAH..

THAT GUY WAS WEIRD...

HE'S MIXED, HUH?

THAT KID...

...HAS SOMETHING ON HIM.

NAH, HE COULDN'T BE.

THE ESCAPEE ALLEGEDLY SAVED?

AND HE'S DEFINITELY BEEN IN CONTACT WITH IT.

BUT HE'S CARRYING SOMETHING STRONGLY RELATED TO IT.

THE ESCAPEE THE ONE WHO WENT MISSING. SOMEHOW...

THERE'S ONLY TWO HIGH-SCHOOL-AGED KIDS IN THE SETTLEMENT.

BUT "IT" DOESN'T HAVE FEELINGS, OR EVEN A SENSE OF SELF

IT'S MORE OF A CONCEPTUAL THING.

IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE FOR IT TO [illegible]?

HAVE A HUNTING DOG IN HUMAN FORM?

...WILL MY HUNTING DOG FIND IT SOON ENOUGH...?

I EVEN LIKE ANIMALS THAT EAT AN' KILL PEOPLE.

IT'S NOT LIKE I LIKE 'EM 'COS THEY'RE WITH ME.

HOW THEY LIVE BY RULES THAT HAVE NOTHIN' TO DO WITH HUMANS.

SOUNDS LIKE YA JUST HATE PEOPLE, THEN!

AH!

HUH?

WHAT'RE YOU CRYIN' FOR?

HN?

OH.

YOSHIKI. YOU'RE AWAKE.

WHATEVER.

CRUMPLED

HERE'S A HANKIE...

GAB

ANYWAY... YER ARM OKAY?

IT SUCKS!

GAB

ALL RIGHT.

EUGH. IT'S SO DIRTY.

I DON'T NEED IT...

HOW'D YOU WIND UP BREAKIN' IT?

SOUNDS PRETTY WILD...

.....

AHH, WELL... ONE OF THE SENIORS SORTA LOST IT AND WENT ON A RAMPAGE IN OUR CLUB-ROOM...

NO ONE'S REALLY TALKIN' ABOUT IT, THOUGH.

MAKI'S ALWAYS BEEN SERIOUS ABOUT THE BASEBALL TEAM...

SCRATCH

SCRATCH

DING-DONG

DING-DONG

CLUNK

CLACK

AND NOW I CAN'T PLAY IN THE TOURNAMENT. BUNCHA BULLSHIT...

...IT'S COM-PLETELY UNBELIEV-ABLE.

ALL OF YOU

...SHOULD BE REVIEWING YOUR LESSONS

SO, WITH END-OF-TERM EXAMS COMING UP SOON...

BLAH...

BLAH

NOUNUKI-SAMA... I STILL KNOW NEXT TO NOTHIN' 'BOUT WHATEVER IT IS.

HAJIME'S FATHER...

WHY DON'T YOU TRY ASKIN' OLD MAN TAKEDA?

HE'S AROUND MY MOMMA'S AGE, AN' ALL...

DID HIKARU'S DADDY...

CLICK

CLICK

...KNOW SOME-THIN'?

EVEN IF I VISITED HIS HOUSE, I DOUBT HE'D TAKE ME SERIOUSLY.

WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

HMM...?

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

HAAH...

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

H BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
SOMETHIN'S... COMIN' THIS WAY...

AH.

DON'T LOOK. DON'T LOOK
DON'T LOOK. DON'T LOOK
DON'T LOOK. DON'T LOOK
DON'T LOOK. DON'T LOOK

HIKARU...!!

IT'S HERE.

ANOTHER MONSTER.

DON'T LOOK.

DON'T LOOK.

カバッ CLACK

THE HECK IS THAT?

HUH?

WAIT...

THAT'S WILD!

HUH !?

SCAMPER

SCAMPER

YO-SHIKI

HUH!? NO WAY!

EEEEK!!

IT'S...

...A PERSON.

GAB

SELF-STUDY

SO THAT WEIRD GUY FROM BEFORE...I HEARD HE SLIT HIS OWN THROAT WITH A KNIFE HE WAS HIDIN' ON 'IM..

YOSHINAGA-SENSEI GOT CUT TOO AN' HAD TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL.

GAB

GUESS WE'RE ALL GOIN' HOME FOR THE DAY, THEN, RIGHT?

GAB

...GOT SOMETHIN' IN 'IM.

THAT WEIRD GUY...

ASA-KO.

YEAH, SOMETHIN' SCARY.

LIKE, INSIDE 'IM... YOU KNOW ...

...POS-SES-SION?

GAB

IN 'IM?

GAB

ME?

YOU ALL RIGHT, HIKARU?

IT'S BEEN HAPPENIN' MORE OFTEN LATELY...

I CAN'T SEE IT, BUT I CAN JUST SORTA SENSE WHEN SOMETHIN'S "ENTERED" A PERSON.

GAB

YER DOWNRIGHT STUFFED...

I MUST HAVE A RESISTANCE TO THEM EVIL SPIRITS. WONDER WHY THAT IS...

HUH? HA-HA-HA!

I'M RIGHT AS RAIN!

IT'S EVEN REACHED THE SCHOOL NOW.

HEY

WHAT IF SOMETHIN' HAPPENS TO EVERYONE?

AND I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DO ANYTHIN' ABOUT IT

ASA-KO

WHAT SHOULD WE DO...?

EVEN ASAKO'S NOTICED.

THERE'RE MORE AND MORE OF THOSE IMPURITIES OUT THERE.

IF IT COMES DOWN TO IT, I'LL—

ズキ THROB

WE'RE DOIN' RESEARCH TO FIGURE THAT OUT, AREN'T WE?

NAH, JUST MY ARM...

.....

WHAT?

I GOT PUSHED EARLIER AND WHACKED IT ON A DESK.

...IT GOT BRUISED UP.

PAIN...?

I'VE HARDLY EVER FELT IT BEFORE...

MURMUR

カチャン CLANK

I HAVE AN ORDER FOR TABLE 8!

MURMUR

カチャン CLANK

DING-DONG

MURMUR

AND SO THEN

WELCOME!

...HEY, SO...

...YER KEEPIN' MY FRAGMENT SAFE, RIGHT?

KICK

MURMUR

カチャン CLANK

FLIP

I'M ALSO... TRYIN' TO FIGURE OUT HOW WE'LL TALK TO OLD MAN TAKEDA.

カチャン CLANK

IS THIS REALLY THE TIME TO BE STUDYIN'!?

I ALWAYS KEEP IT CLOSE TO ME.

MURMUR

カチャ CLANK

YEAH, GOT IT HERE.

HERE YOU GO!

MURMUR

I PROLLY WON'T BE OKAY IF THAT THING BREAKS.

ピンポーン DING-DONG!

MURMUR

カチャ CLANK

カチャ TINK

DON'T EVER LOSE IT, YA HEAR?

MURMUR

MURMUR

COURSE IT IS...SHOWS THAT I'M SERIOUS 'BOUT THIS...

BUT I MIGHT GO BACK TO NORMAL IF IT'S RETURNED TO MY BODY...

カチャ CLINK

MURMUR

WHAT!?

IT'S THAT IM-POR-TANT!?

I'LL HAVE TO PUT IT IN A SAFER PLACE...

CLANK カタン

CLINK カタ

BUT I EXPECT...

...THERE AIN'T NO WAY TO BREAK THAT THING ANYHOW.

HAAH ...

.....

What ?

JINGLE

THE SOUND OF A BELL...?

JINGLE

JINGLE

WAH! AH!

AAAH!

GRAB

YO-
SUKI

DON'T
MOVE

JINGLE

JINGLE

JINGLE

JINGLE

I CAN'T DO IT...

NO.

ぼたっ!
SPLAT

YEEK

DASH

..ZHI!!

AHAH!
HEE!
HI-KARU ...!
JINGLE
CLINK
RATTLE
IT WON'T OPEN ...!
WHY !?

YOOOOOOOO

SPLUSH

COME ON. GET UP.

MURMUR

MURMUR

MURMUR

MURMUR

DUE TO CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES,
TANAKA'S HAMSTER HOUSES THE SOUL
OF A HUMAN CHILD ITS CONSCIOUSNESS
IS THAT OF A HAMSTER, BUT THE
SOUL ALLOWS IT TO DETECT
ENTITIES NOT OF THIS WORLD

CHAPTER 20

I'M SORRY...!

IORI...

TH'S IS MOMMA'S FAULT.
DOES IT HURT?
MOMMA WAS WRONG.

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN, AND YET..!
I KNEW IT...

TUCK
TUCK
TUCK
TUCK

AH!

TUCK
TUCK
TUCK

IS THIS...

...HIM?

BOYS NEVER DO LISTEN WHEN THEY'VE BEEN WARNED

DO THEY?

HMM

WE...

.. I'M SORRY.

NO... I'M SORRY TOO.

WOULDN'TA THOUGHT HE'D BE A REGULAR KID LIKE THIS...

UM...

THANK YOU FOR EARLIER.

.....

YER WEL-COME.

LUCKY I HAPPENED TO BE AROUND.

BUT WHY WAS THAT THIN' THERE...?

SOMEONE MUST'VE DUG UP AN OLD GRAVE TO CREATE IT.

...WAS SOMETHIN' LIKE A CURSE. IT WAS MAKIN' USE OF AN ANCIENT AND POWERFUL IMPURITY.

THAT THING FROM BEFORE ...

UH.

UM.

WHAT EXACTLY WAS IT?

SOMETHIN' LIKE A "STAIN"... OR "IMPURITY"?

BLUP

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "IMPURITY" ...?

LUCKILY, I WAS ABLE TO DRIVE IT AWAY...

OR MAYBE MORE LIKE, IT RETREATED ON ITS OWN.

...IT'S SOMETHIN' LIKE A "GHOST" OR "SPIRIT"...

TO PUT IT SIMPLY...

BUT WHEN THERE'S A DISTORTION, THAT VEIL RIPS.

AND THINGS COME OUT.

ALL I CAN DO IS SEND BACK THE STUFF THAT'S COME OUT...

...AND CLOSE SMALL HOLES.

...IS A THIN VEIL.

THIS WORLD AN' THE OTHER SIDE ARE REAL CLOSE TO EACH OTHER. ONLY THING KEEPIN' 'EM APART...

THE SOULS AN' EMOTIONS OF THE DEAD PASS THROUGH THAT VEIL...

...AN' *THE GODS ON THE OTHER SIDE* LET THEM BE REBORN IN THIS WORLD.

POP

BUT I CAN'T DESTROY 'EM...

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME— SEEIN' AS I'M NO GOD.

I...

...DON'T QUITE GET IT...

...BUT OKAY.

IT'S LIKE, AH— WHAT'S IT CALLED...?

THAT NEEDLE-Y THING AT THE TOP OF A BUILDIN'...

THAT BOY THERE...

...SEEMS TO REALLY DRAW IN THOSE IMPURI-TIES.

AND SO DO YOU.

A LIGHT-NING ROD?

YEAH, THAT.

BUT THERE'S BEEN ALL KINDS OF ACCIDENTS AN' INCIDENTS THESE DAYS...IT'S AWFUL.

THAT'S PROLLY WHY THE TOWNS AN' SETTLEMENTS WERE SAFE.

WHEN HE WAS IN THE MOUNTAINS, HE ATTRACTED IMPURITIES THERE LIKE A LIGHTNIN' ROD.

IT'S EXACTLY LIKE THAT.

YEAH...

BUT IT'S AWFULLY STRANGE FOR THERE TO BE THIS MANY IMPURITIES.

SO IT'S NOT HIKA-RU...

IS THAT WHAT YER SAY-ING?

THE ACCIDENTS AND THINGS ARE CAUSED BY THE IMPURI-TIES...

PEEL

...BUT HAVIN' THIS MUCH AROUND AIN'T GOOD.

THEY AREN'T ALWAYS BAD...

FLAP

...WAS REALLY JUST HIM...

I WONDER IF THAT STRONG PRESENCE I FELT FROM THE MOUNTAINS...

HUH...? WHERE AM I?

YO-SHIKI?

HI-KARU

NO...

THANK GOOD-NESS.

YOU AREN'T HURT?

BANNER LIVE TODAY WITH GRATITUDE

UH

DOES SHE...

DOES SHE KNOW?

YOU TOLD HER ABOUT ME?

HEY.

.. WHO'S THAT? WHO IS SHE?

YO-SHIKI ...

.. YEAH. SHE NOTICED .. OR IT'S MORE LIKE ..

AN' EVEN IF I WANTED TO, I COULDN'T.

I AIN'T PLANNIN' ON DOIN' NOTHIN' TO Y'ALL.

HOW 'BOUT Y'ALL SIT HERE WITH ME FOR NOW?

HMMM

IT'S DIF-FER-ENT NOW.

TOTALLY DIFFER-ENT.

...MAKES SENSE, I GUESS.

SO YOU...

...DIDN'T TRUST ME AT ALL, DID YA?

JUST WHO ARE YA, LADY?

I'M JUST A HOUSE-WIFE.

HUH?

BACK AT THE RESTAURANT, A MY OPPONENT DEFEAT THAT THING?

WITH THAT MUCH I AM NOW YOSHIKI!!...

AND THIS TIME I'LL DO IT!

I KNOW.

I WON'T HURT HER. I MEAN, CAN'T EVEN IF I TRIED.

HIKARU

IT'S NOTHIN' BUT SWEETS...

THEY'RE SHIITAKE BUNS.

SHIITAKE BUN

COME NOW, HIKARU, GO ON AN' EAT SOME. IT'S TASTY.

SHOVE
ドーン!!

MMPH.

HEY...!! DON'T GO EATIN' UP ALL OF SOMEONE'S BUNS IN THEIR OWN HOME!

THE HECK ...!?

DANG, THAT'S GOOD!

SNATCH

HEY.

HI-KARU-KUN.

WHAT EXACTLY ARE YA?

YA KNOW

EVEN I DUNNO

BEATS ME

I KNEW SOME-ONE LIKE YOU...

A LONG TIME AGO, MY DEAD HUSBAND CAME BACK JUST LIKE YA DID.

HEY.

MOMMA?

WHY D'YA MAKE SUPPER FOR DADDY WHEN HE AIN'T AROUND NO MORE?

HE'S IN THERE.

ABOUT YER PUDDIN'

...MADE MY POKÉMEN STRONG!

"THAT'S SILLY."

OH?

WAAAH!!

Ah!

...CONTROLS LIKE IT'S A LITTLE HARDER.

I KNOW THIS DON'T LAST FOREVER, BUT IN THE REAL WORLD, JUST...

I'M...NO IMPURITY. AT LEAST, I DON'T THINK I AM.

I'M SOMETHIN' ELSE ENTIRELY...

...BUT HE WAS IN A REAL STATE COMPARED TO YA, HIKARU-KUN.

THERE'S NO DOUBT IT WAS MY HUSBAND'S SOUL...

...BUT THAT THING WAS NOTHIN' MORE THAN AN IMPURITY THROUGH AN' THROUGH...

UM...

DO YA KNOW ABOUT NOUNUKI-SAMA...?

FOR YOU, IT'S LIKE...

...YER OUTSIDE THE CYCLE OF REBIRTH.

YER MORE... INCOMPRE-HENSIBLE... Y'KNOW?

NOU-NUKI-SAMA?

SORRY, I DUNNO 'BOUT THAT.
WHAT DO Y'ALL WANNA DO ABOUT THIS?
...A LOTTA PEOPLE WILL DIE.

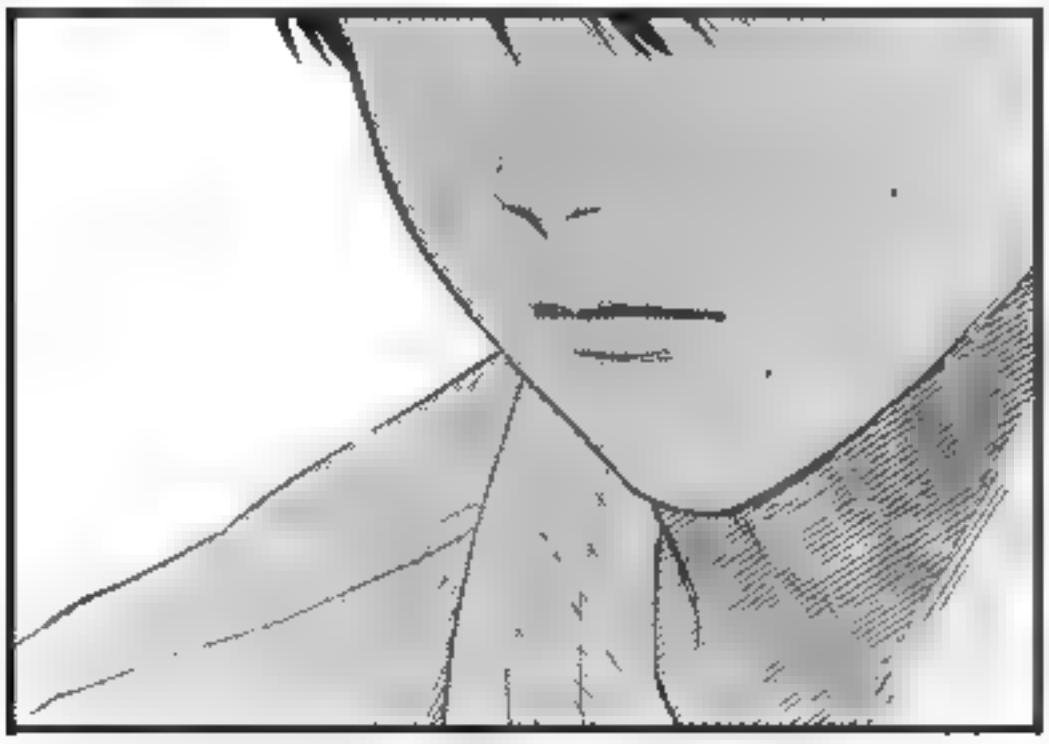
BUT YOSHIKI WOULD NEVER DO THAT.

I COULD LEAVE ALL OF THIS AN' RUN AWAY.

I DON'T REALLY GET HOW VALUABLE A LIFE CAN BE.

I...

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOSHIKI...IS IMPORTANT TO ME TOO...



I FINALLY FOUND A SPECIAL PLACE FOR ME...
...SO I WANNA PROTECT IT.

I SEE.

...AND I CAN'T JUST IGNORE THAT PEOPLE WILL DIE BECAUSE OF THAT.
...I'VE DECIDED TO FOLLOW HIM WHEREVER HE GOES...

IN THAT CASE ...

...WE'LL HAVE TO FIGURE SOMETHIN' OUT TOGETHER.

THEY'RE GOOD KIDS.

OKAY

OH!

WAIT, MY SHOES

GO ON AHEAD

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

CHK

WATCH OUT FOR CARS ON THE WAY HOME

HIKARU-KUN.

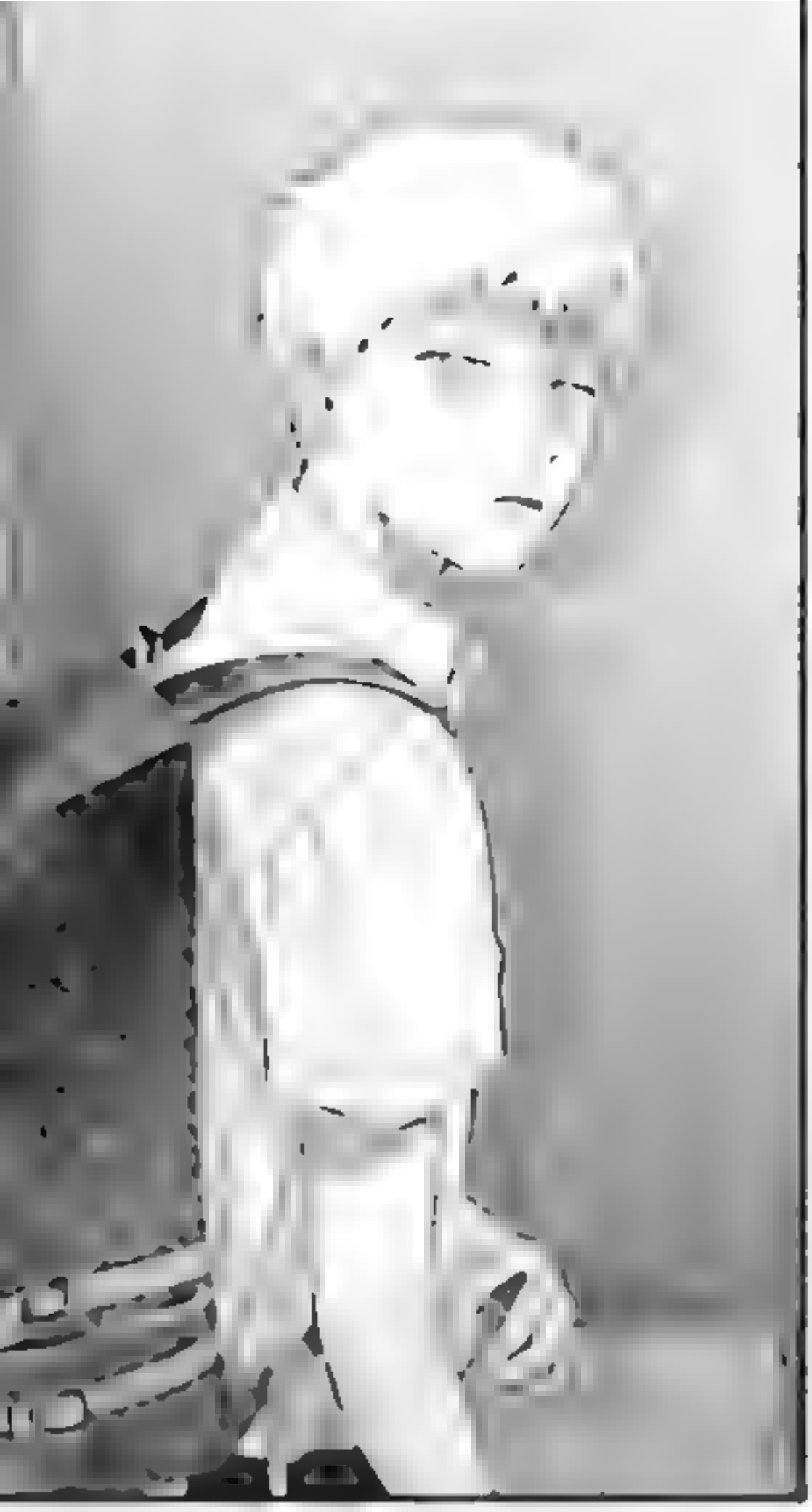
ALL RIGHT

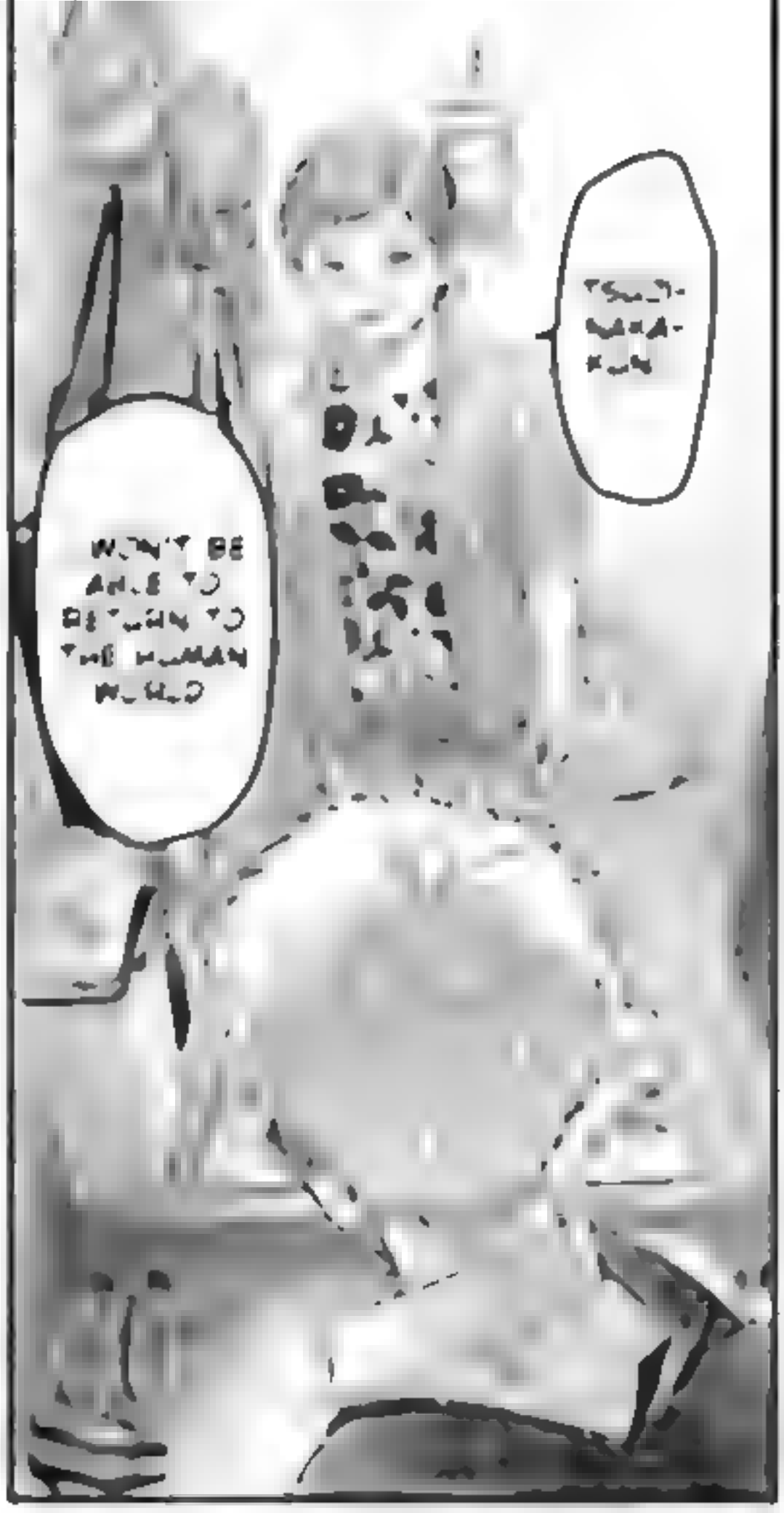
SHUT

YA...

...CAN'T LET TSUJINAKA-KUN GET ANY MORE MIXED THAN HE ALREADY IS, OKAY?

YA KNOW THAT, RIGHT...?



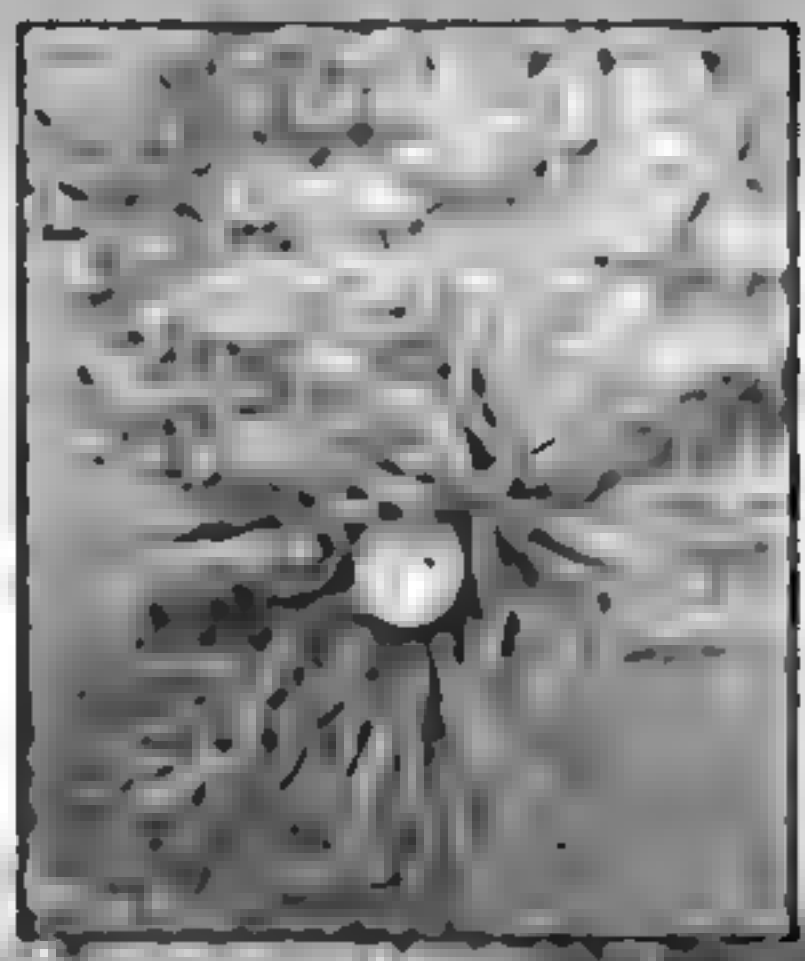

WON'T BE
ABLE TO
RETURN TO
THE HUMAN
WORLD

THROB
"

JINGLE

JINGLE

BOOM



SKRSH
SKRSH
SKRSH
DING-DONG

CREAK

CREAK

COMING!

CREAK

CREAK

THE DOOR-BELL?

WHO COULD IT BE THIS LATE...?

HIKARU?

RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE

WHO IS IT?

YEAH
...

WHAT'S UP ALL OF A SUDDEN...?

DON'T JUST STAND OUT THERE. COME IN.

I'M GOOD.

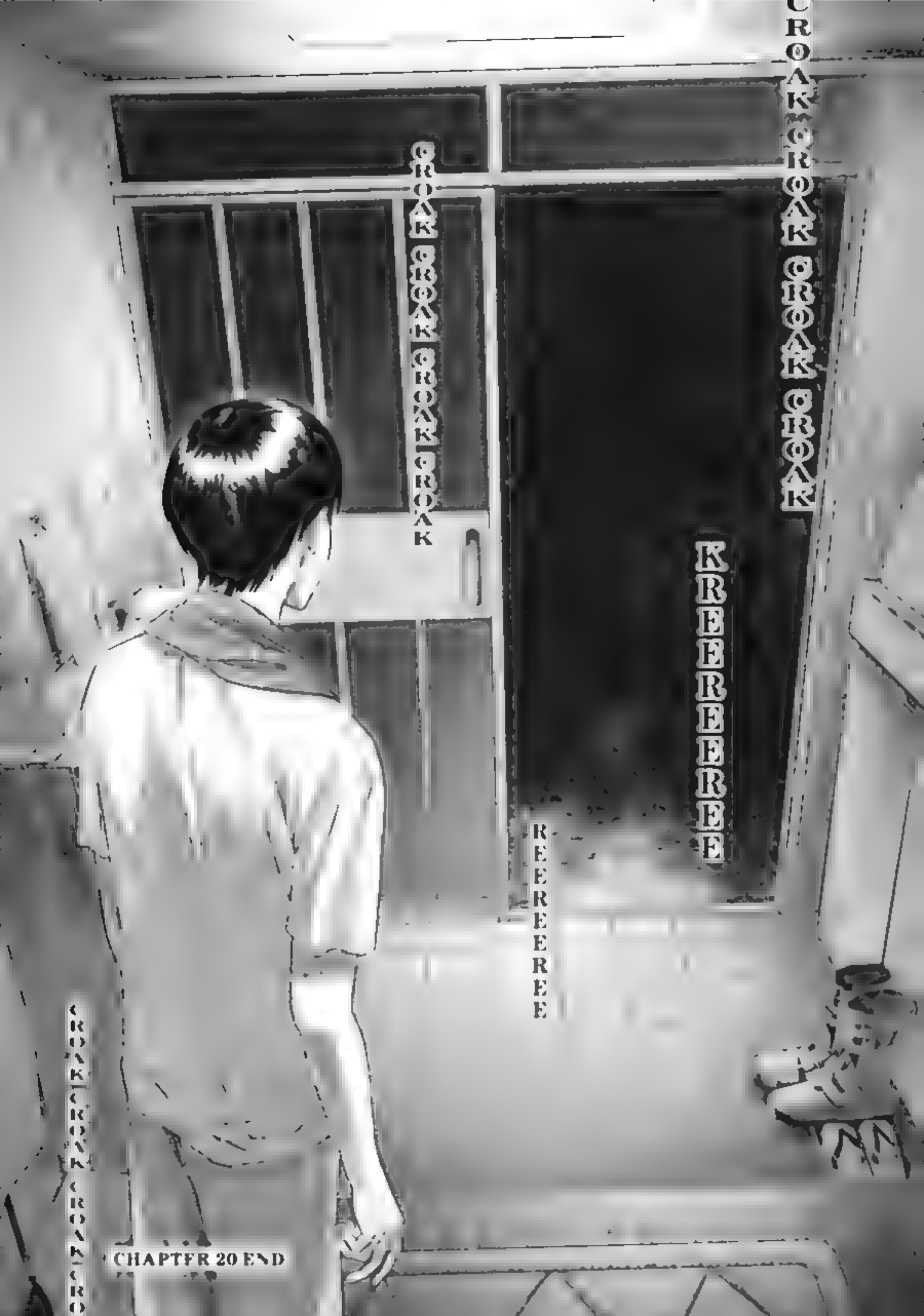
SORRY

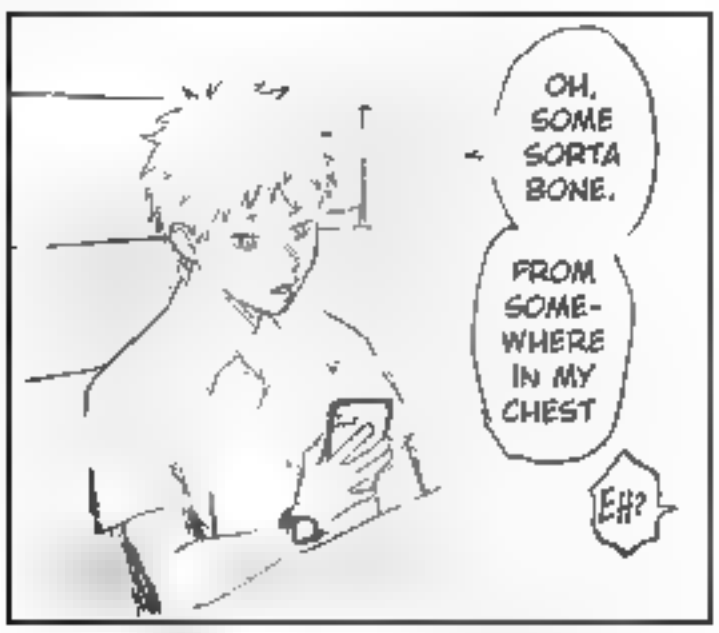
SKRSH

SKRSH

SKRSH

.....


CHAPTER 20 END



HIKARU HAS NO PHYSICAL FORM, SO HE NEEDS A CONTAINER (XIPHOID PROCESS)

YOUNG KUREBAYASHI-SAN
SHE'S A HARD WORKER SINCE HER BIOLOGICAL MOTHER DIED YOUNG. HER STEPMOTHER TAKES CARE OF HER

CHAPTER 21

DEAD
DEAD

AS LONG AS HE'S HERE
NO ONE WILL MOURN YA

SORRY 'BOUT ALL THIS.

FOR-GETTIN'.. IS WHAT SCARES ME THE MOST.

BUT WITH HIM AROUND, I'M HAPPY 'COS I WON'T FORGET YOU.

WHOA!

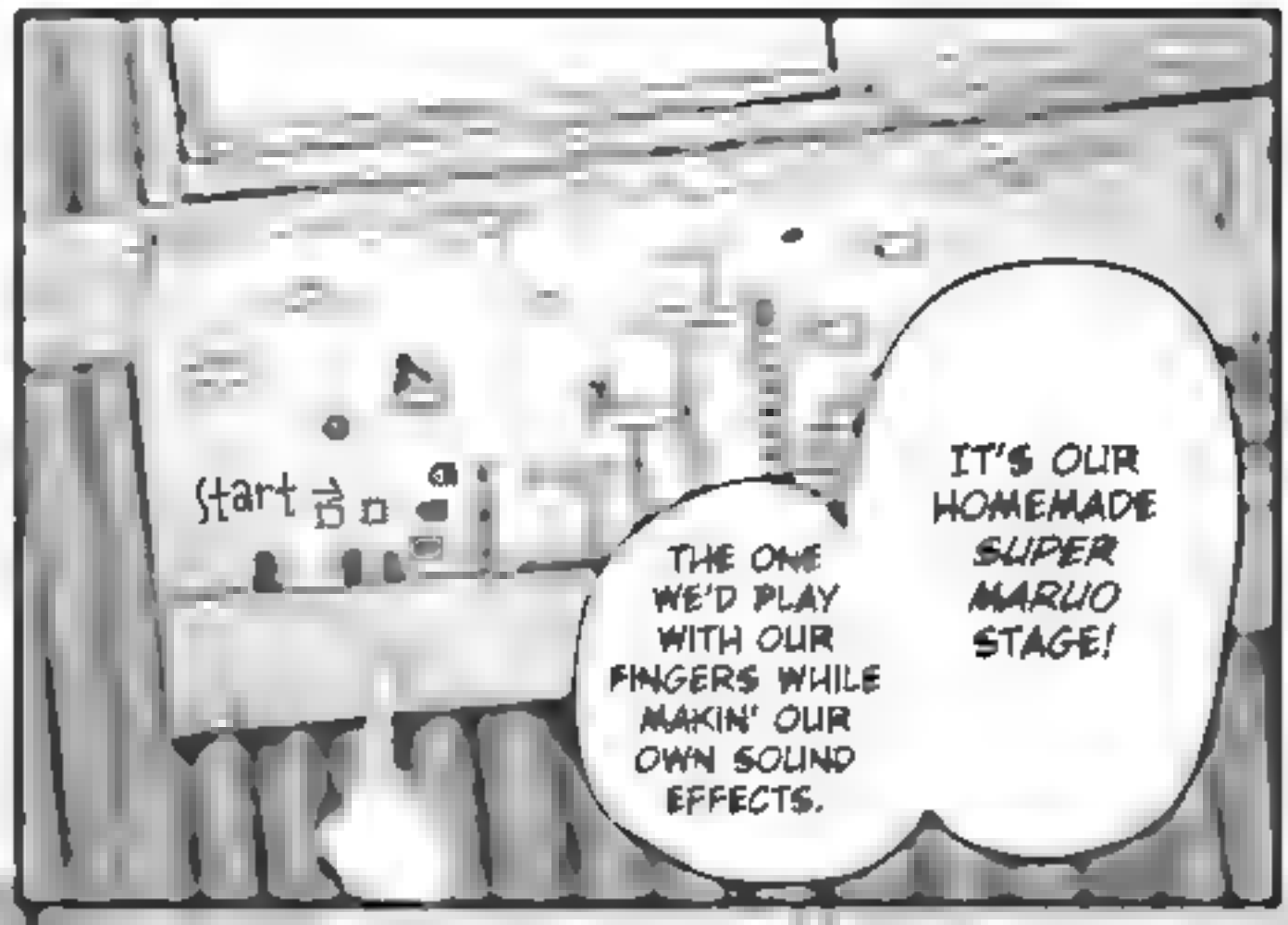
USED TO PLAY HERE A BUNCH BACK IN THE DAY... 'MEMBER?

SO THIS IS WHERE YA BEEN.

THIS BRINGS ME BACK...

OH, CHECK IT OUT!

DANGER


start
THE ONE WE'D PLAY WITH OUR FINGERS WHILE MAKIN' OUR OWN SOUND EFFECTS.
IT'S OUR HOMEMADE SUPER MARIO STAGE!

YER TOTALLY DIFFERENT

HARDER TO GET TOO.

HE WAS MORE CONSIDERATE AN' GROWN-UP...

HEY, SO... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ME AN' HIM?

SO YER NOT THE SAME.

...HE'S NEVER COMING BACK.

HE WAS ALSO PRETTY BUCK

HE WAS MORE OF A TROUBLE-MAKER AND HE HAD A BUNCH

AND

D'JSA LIKE 'IM?

NAH

NO REASON, REALLY

WHY YA ASKIN' ?

..YOU TURNED AWAY WHEN YOU SAW ME SHIRTLESS BEFORE...

I MEAN ...

WHAT WAS ALL THAT... ... ABOUT ..?

I DON'T WANNA SAY

WHY NOT?

...NOW WHEN I LOOK AT YOUR BODY, I DON'T THINK NOTHIN' OF IT.

...YA NEED TO UNDERSTAND THOSE SORTS OF FEELINGS.

BESIDES... I DON'T THINK...

'COS AT A BASIC LEVEL, I'M...

...COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM HUMANS.

...I MEAN, IT'S TRUE. "THOSE SORTS OF FEELINGS" ARE SOMETHING... I DON'T HAVE.

...THE HECK IS ALL THAT?

AND...

WE HAVE OUR OWN THINGS. THINGS THAT EXIST JUST BETWEEN ME AN' YOU.

...YOU DON'T NEED TO BE HUMAN, ANYWAY.

ACTUALLY, I PREFER THAT YA DON'T BECOME HUMAN.

HUH ...?

GRAB

WAIT!

REALLY ...?

BUT IF THERE WERE A PLACE WHERE WE COULD LIVE A NEW LIFE

I WON'T FORCE ANYONE TO FIGHT WITH HUMANS

BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN

...GIVE UP EVERYTHING.

FOR THAT, I'D...

CHIRRUP CHIRRUP CHIRRUP CHIRRUP

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

CHIRRUP CHIRRUP CHIRRUP CHIRRUP

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

CHIRRUP CHIRRUP CHIRRUP CHIRRUP

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH

CHIRRUP

SHF

Nissyama

Matsuyama

WHAT WE KNOW NOW IS

Kaiyama

Nikaiyama

Nisiyama

Matsuyama

AFTER A CERTAIN FAMINE, IT BECAME A CURSED GOD AND COULD NO LONGER LEAVE THE MOUNTAINS.

SAMA IS A GOD THAT GRANTS WISHES IN EXCHANGE FOR "SOMETHIN'."

AND DURIN' THAT FAMINE A LOTTA VILLAGE FOLK DIED

...IT SEEMS LIKE THE MEN OF THE INDOU FAMILY HAVE BEEN USING "HICHI-SAN"...

...TO PERFORM SOME SORTA RITUAL IN THE MOUNTAINS FOR GENERATIONS.

LIKE IT WAS SEALED AWAY OR SOMETHIN'?

'COS YOU DID A SLOPPY JOB WITH YOUR "COPYIN"...

TRUE.

HUH.

MAYBE THEY WERE "SEALERS" OR SOMETHIN'. I DUNNO.

HIKARU SHOULD'VE KNOWN 'BOUT THE RITUAL, BUT I DON'T SOMEHOW...

AND APPARENTLY PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS FLED HERE 'COS OF THAT.

BUT DID THEY WORSHIP NOUNUKI-SAMA HERE BEFORE WESTERN RELIGIONS CAME?

WE ALSO KNOW THE SETTLEMENTS AROUND HERE USED TO BE ONE VILLAGE.

I WONDER WHY THEY GOT SUCH WEIRD NAMES.

SINCE THE OLD DAYS, IT'S BEEN HARD FOR THE DOMAIN TO INTERFERE WITH THINGS HERE TOO...

MAYBE THEY BELIEVED THERE WAS A CURSE.

THAT MIGHT BE IT, ACTUALLY.

...OR SOME-THIN'.

HAD PEOPLE ALL LIKE, "THEY BE WORSHIPPIN' SOME WEIRD-ASS GOD OVER YONDER. BEST STAY AWAY"...

HMM... MAYBE IT'S 'COS THEY WERE ALL CREEPY AN' STUFF.

Forbidden Area

Novnvki-sama

curse?

THAT THING KUREBA-YASHI-SAN SAID ABOUT YA.

AND THEN... THERE'S YOU.

ME?

YER A HUGE MASS OF SOMETHIN', LIKE HELL ITSELF.

AND YA EXIST OUTSIDE THE CYCLE OF REBIRTH.

SHE SAID YER ATTRACTIN' IMPURITIES LIKE A LIGHTNIN' ROD.

BUT YER NOT AN IMPURITY YERSELF.

MAYBE YER SOME SORTA GOD?

NOT REAL SURE WHAT ALL THAT MEANS, THOUGH.

THAT'S HOW SHE DESCRIBED ME?

HEY...

BUT IF I'M A GOD, WHY'M I SO TROUBLED ...?

MAYBE I AM.

FOLKS'VE BEEN ADDIN' "-SAMA" TO MY NAME AN' ALL...

IF THAT'S THE CASE...

...IF I WENT BACK TO THE MOUN-TAINS...

SO...

...I LEFT THE MOUNTAINS, AND 'COS OF THAT, THE IMPURITIES POOLIN' UP THERE STARTED POURIN' OUT, RIGHT?

KUREBAYASHI-SAN'S HELPING US, AND YOU AND I, WE'LL FIND A WAY... TOGETHER.

THAT CAN'T BE THE WAY TO DO THIS.

YA FINALLY FOUND A PLACE FOR YERSELF, DIDN'T YA?

BY THE WAY, TWO DAYS AGO, YA CAME BY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, RIGHT?

HMM...

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?

I THINK I DID.

HUH?

OH... YEAH ...

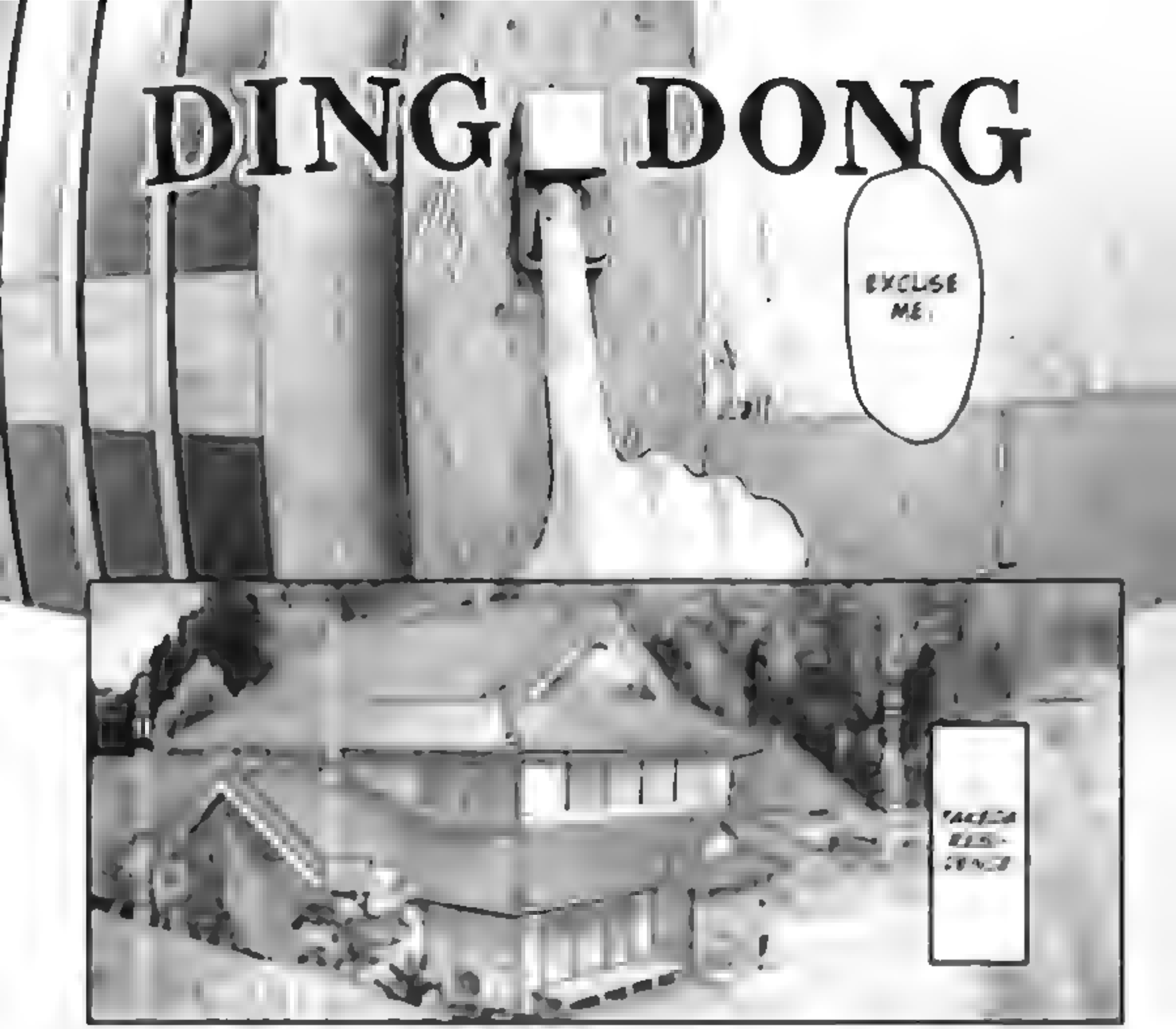
SO I'M NOT SURE.

MY MEMORY'S BLURRY.

I WONDER WHY...

...I...

DING DONG


EXCUSE ME!

IT'S A LEAD—
SO IT'S WORTH A SHOT

THINK HE'LL ACTUALLY TALK TO US?
HIS SON'S SCARY ENOUGH AS IT IS.
OLD MAN TAPPED AS A SHUT-IN, AIN'T HE?

WELL... UH...

WE'D LIKE TO ASK OLD MAN TAKEDA SOME QUESTIONS...

FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, WHAT Y'ALL WANT?

YER THE INDOU BOY, AND...? WELL, I'LL BE!

WHAT Y'ALL NEED?

HE WON'T EVEN GO OUTSIDE. WHAT Y'ALL WANNA ASK HIM ANYWAY?

MY FATHER-IN-LAW? NOT GONNA HAPPEN WITH THE STATE HE'S IN...

EVEN A HOUSEWIFE LIKE ME HAS A FEW FAVORS OWED TO HER HERE AND THERE...

IF YOU FIND YERSELF IN A BIND, JUST MENTION MY NAME.

AH!

I THINK SHE'S THE PERSON MY FATHER-IN-LAW'S BEEN LOOKIN' FOR

KUREBAYASHI...?

SOMEONE NAMED KUREBAYASHI ASKED US TO COME BY

GULP

BRING HER TO ME.

GO GET KURE-BAYASHI.

HURRY NOW. I NEED HER HERE QUICK.

RUSTLE RUSTLE

I FINALLY FOUND ONE... A *REAL* MEDIUM.

WH—

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR KUREBAYASHI-SAN?

I'M THE NEXT ONE. I'M GONNA BE KILLED.

KILLED...? YOU MEAN... AFTER MATSUURA-SAN?

.....

...IS BEIN' SWAL-LOWED UP BY IMPURI-TIES.

THIS VILLAGE...

THAT BIG... TERRIBLE... ~~~~- SAMA...

CRUMPLE

IT'S HERE... DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

GLARE

AND WHOSE FAULT IS THIS...?

YOU MEAN NOUNUKI-SAMA...?

...JUST WHO'S TO BLAME FOR ALL THIS...?

TELL ME, "INDOU" BOY...

THIS ALL GOES BACK TO THE TABOO COMMITTED BY AN INDOU!

AN' SCORES OF PEOPLE DIED 'COS OF IT!

A TABOO ...?

HUH ...?

UM...

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO DIED IN THE GREAT FAMINE OF 1749?

THAT'S WHY...FOR GENERATIONS, THE INDOU MEN'VE GONE TO THE MOUNTAINS TO *APOLOGIZE*...

TO RETURN WHAT THEY RECEIVED...

AS AN INDOU, YOU OUGHTTA KNOW... -KOFF!- -KOFF!-

IT WAS A CURSE!

WRATH INCURRED OVER A WISH THAT WENT TOO FAR!

IT WASN'T JUST THE FAMINE!

...WHAT EXACTLY DID HE DO?

THAT INDOU FELLA...

GO AN' LOOK AT YER FAMILY'S SHRINE !!!

DON'T YA KNOW WHY YER FAMILY NAME'S "INDOU"?

DID NO ONE TELL YA!?

YA DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT!?

NO WONDER THE RITUAL FAILED!

YOSHIKI.

THIS AIN'T GOOD.

WAI—

WAIT.

C-C-CALM DOWN.

I...

...SAW...

...IT...

...IN THE MOUN-

-TAINS

IT'S ALREADY IN 'IM.

HIS HAIR
. GOT ALL BUSHY ..
....

SHE

WHAT!?

SSST

KCHAK

THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP

GRAB

HELLO THERE...

...HIKARU INDOU-KUN.

...!

WHO'RE YOU?

WHOOSH

SNATCH

HUH?

HA HA HA!

THE HAMSTER GUY FROM BEFORE!

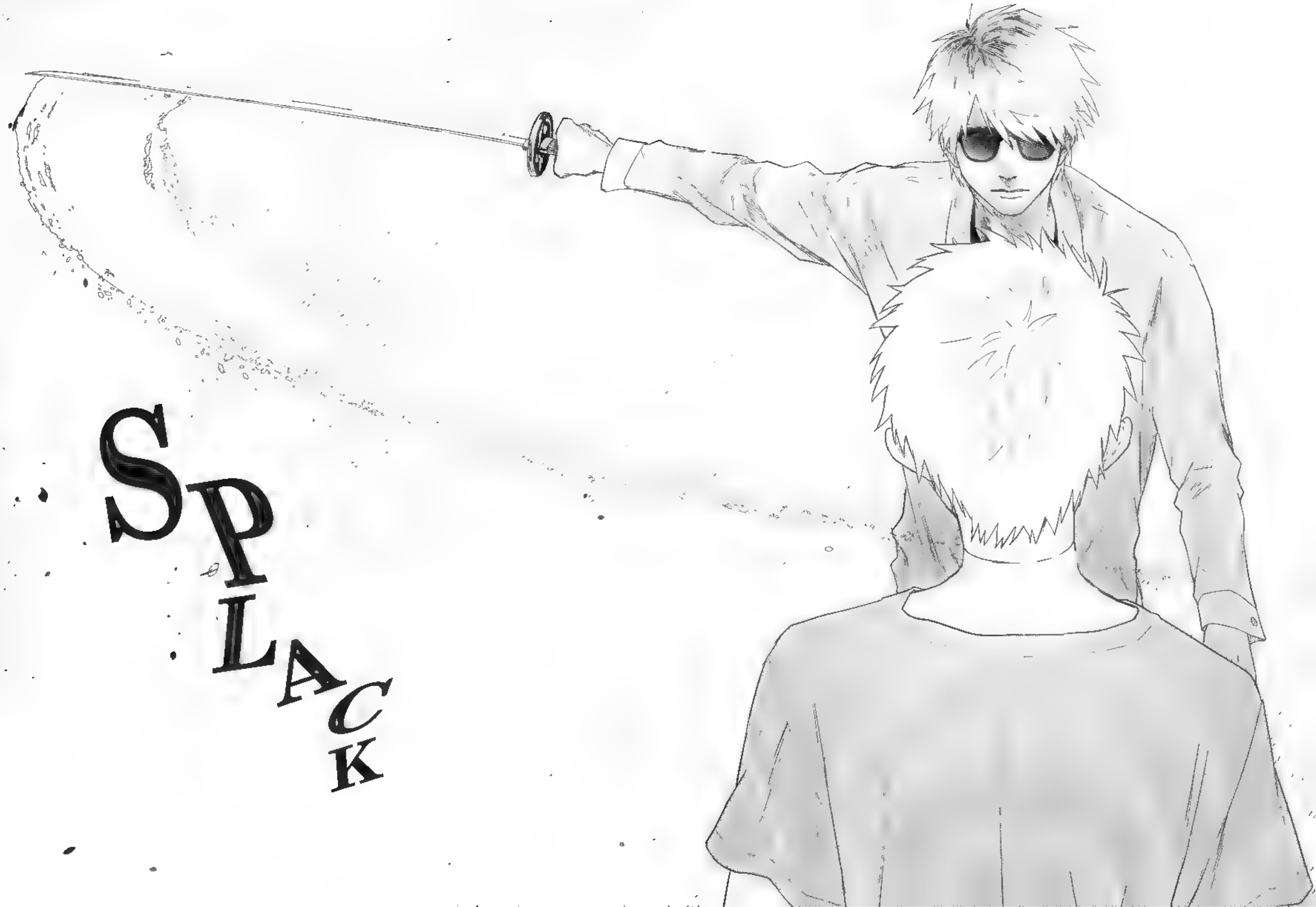
SLASH

SORRY.

...NEED TO CHECK SOMETHING.

I JUST...

SPLACK

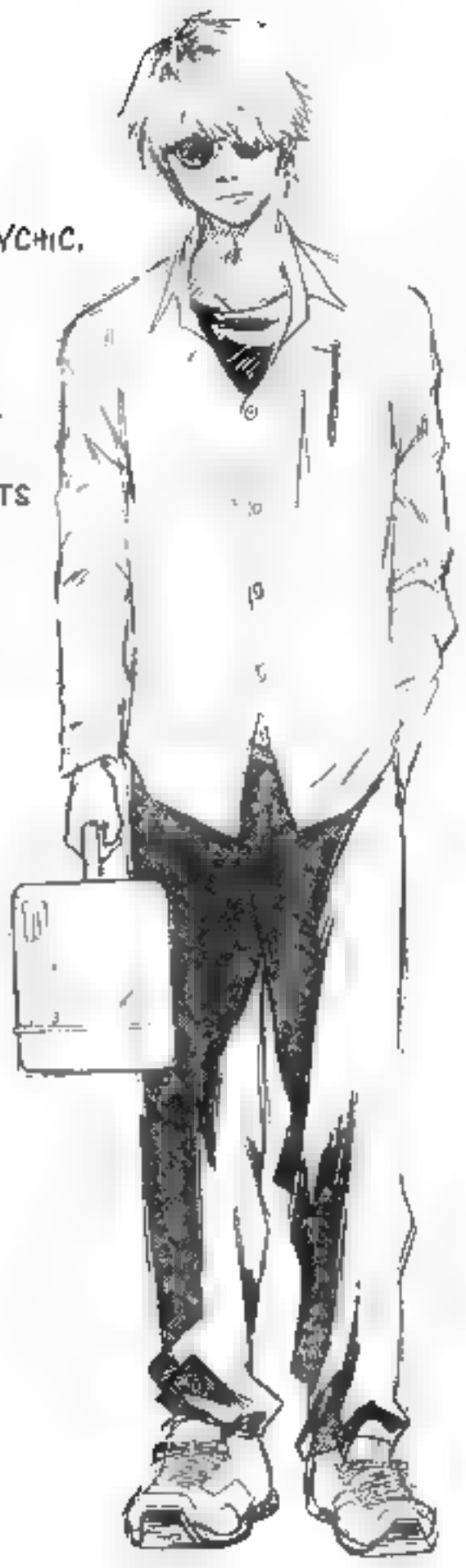


HUH?

VOLUME 4 END

TANAKA ISN'T A PSYCHIC, SO HE CAN'T SEE ANYTHING.

HE FINDS PHYSICAL SIGNS AND MAKES VARIOUS JUDGMENTS FROM THERE. (EXAMPLE BELLS, RODENTS)



HE'S NEARLY 6'3"

TRANSLATION NOTES

COMMON HONORIFICS

***-san*:** The Japanese equivalent of Mr /Mrs /Miss If a situation calls for politeness, this is the fail-safe honorific
***-sama*:** Conveys great respect; may also indicate that the social status of the speaker is lower than that of the addressee.
***-kun*:** Used most often when referring to boys, this indicates affection or familiarity. Occasionally used by older men among their peers, but it may also be used by anyone referring to a person of lower standing.
***-chan*:** An affectionate honorific indicating familiarity used mostly in reference to girls; also used in reference to cute persons or animals regardless of gender.
no honorific: Indicates familiarity or closeness, if used without permission or reason, addressing someone in this manner would constitute an insult.
***-nisan, nii-san, aniki,* etc.:** A term of endearment meaning "big brother" that may be more widely used to address any young man who is like a brother, regardless of whether he is related or not.

GENERAL

Hikaru: The Chinese character for Hikaru's name means "light."

PAGE 16

Bark Bulletin. The Japanese "Wansoku" is a parody of a famous internet thread-roundup blog.

PAGE 16-17, 27-28

Place-names The Japanese language uses several writing systems, one of which, called *kanji*, borrows Chinese characters that each have their own meaning. Location names generally use this kanji writing system hence, the characters that make up place-names each have their own meanings. *Ude* is the Japanese word for "arm," while *ashi* means "leg." Additionally, different kanji can be homophones, the "tachi" in "Kabitachi" was changed from meaning "sever," to "stand," while the pronunciation remained the same.

BONUS

ONE DAY, A LITTLE BEFORE MAKI BROKE HIS ARM

HEY

GAB

GAB

GAB

BOMF

BRRRR

HA HA HA HA!

HEH HA HA!

THE HECK IS THAT? IT'S FREAKY!

MAKI.

WHAT'RE Y'ALL DOIN'?

COME WITH ME.

WAIT.

Y'ALL'RE FREE, RIGHT!?

WHY?

THIS IS THE ONLY SPOT THAT'S SUPER SLIPPERY LIKE THIS! SERIOUSLY!

NO CLUE

SURE-FALL HALL?

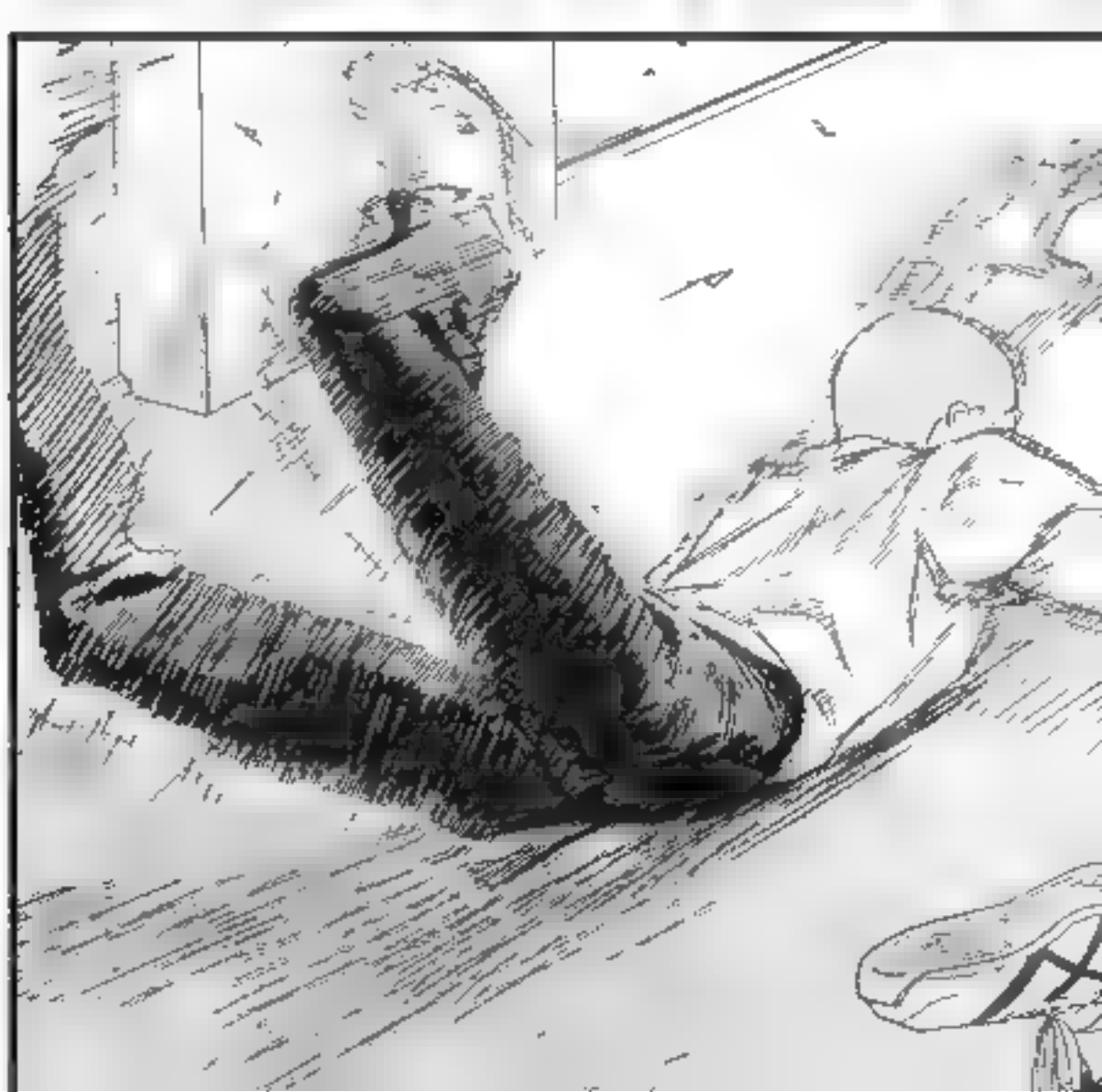
FIGURED IT WAS 'COS HE'S CLUMSY.

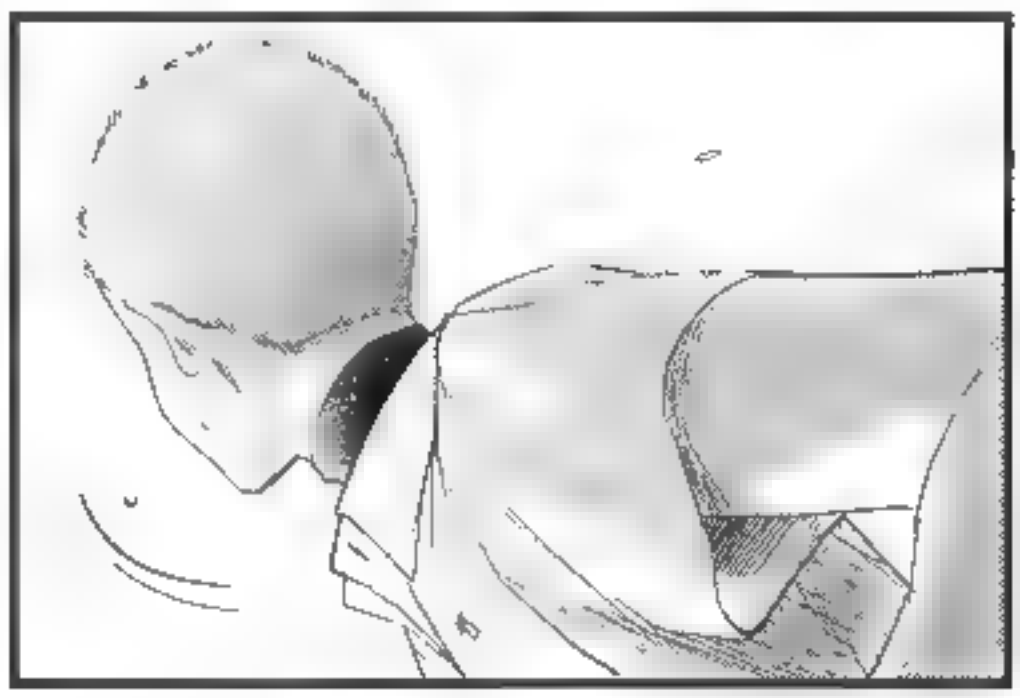
HUH? SO THE HALLWAY'S THE PROBLEM?

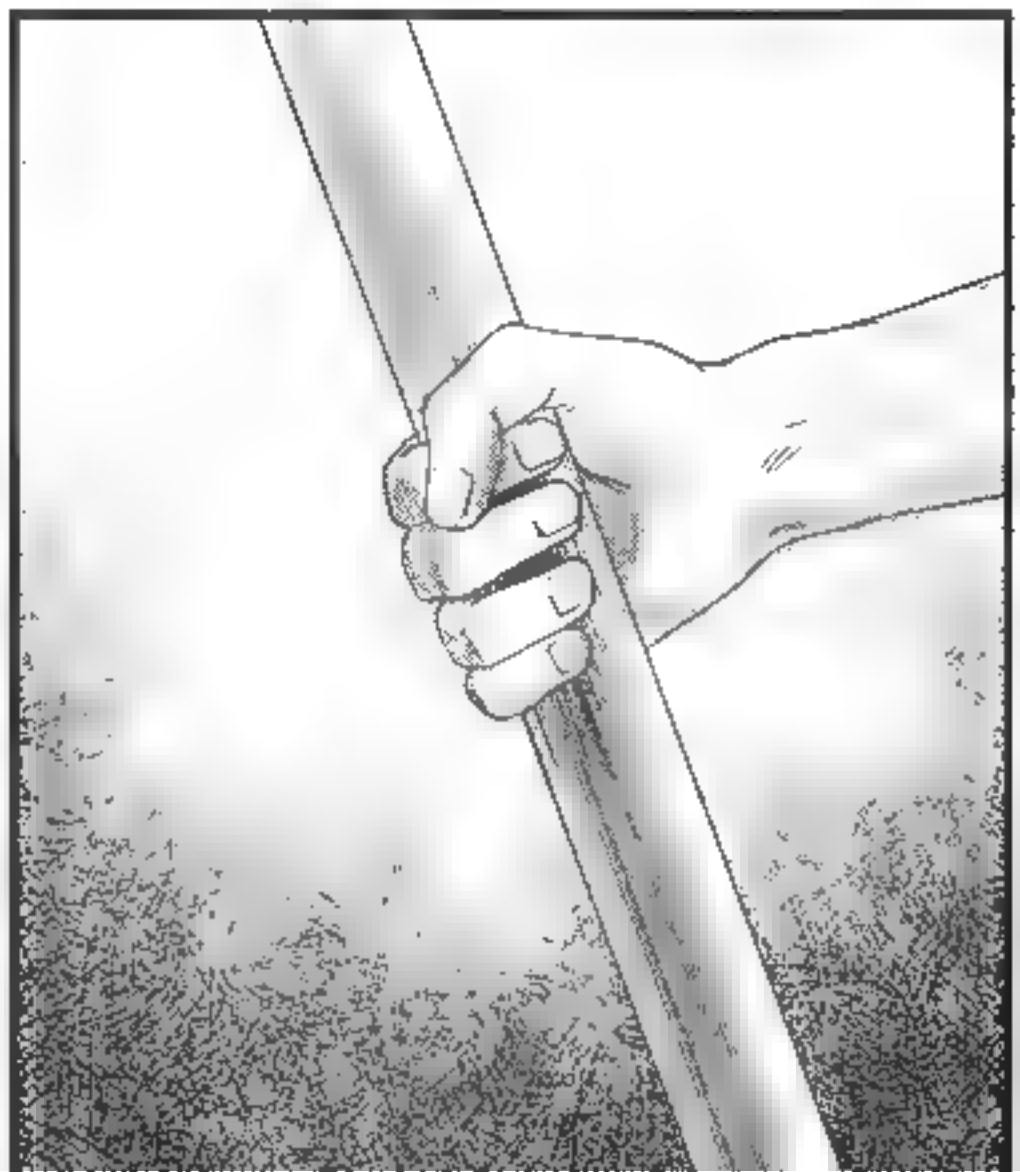
COACH HARA FALLS HERE EVERY DAY

NO ONE'LL FALL AS LONG AS YA KNOW IT'S SLIPPERY...

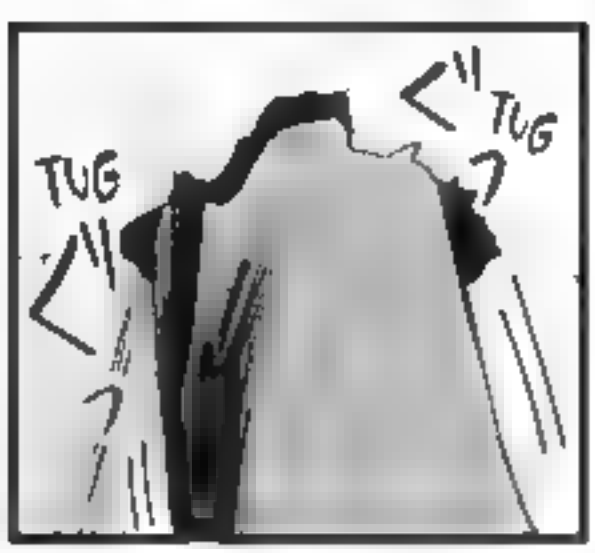
IF YA CAN WALK THROUGH THERE WITHOUT FALLIN', YA WIN.

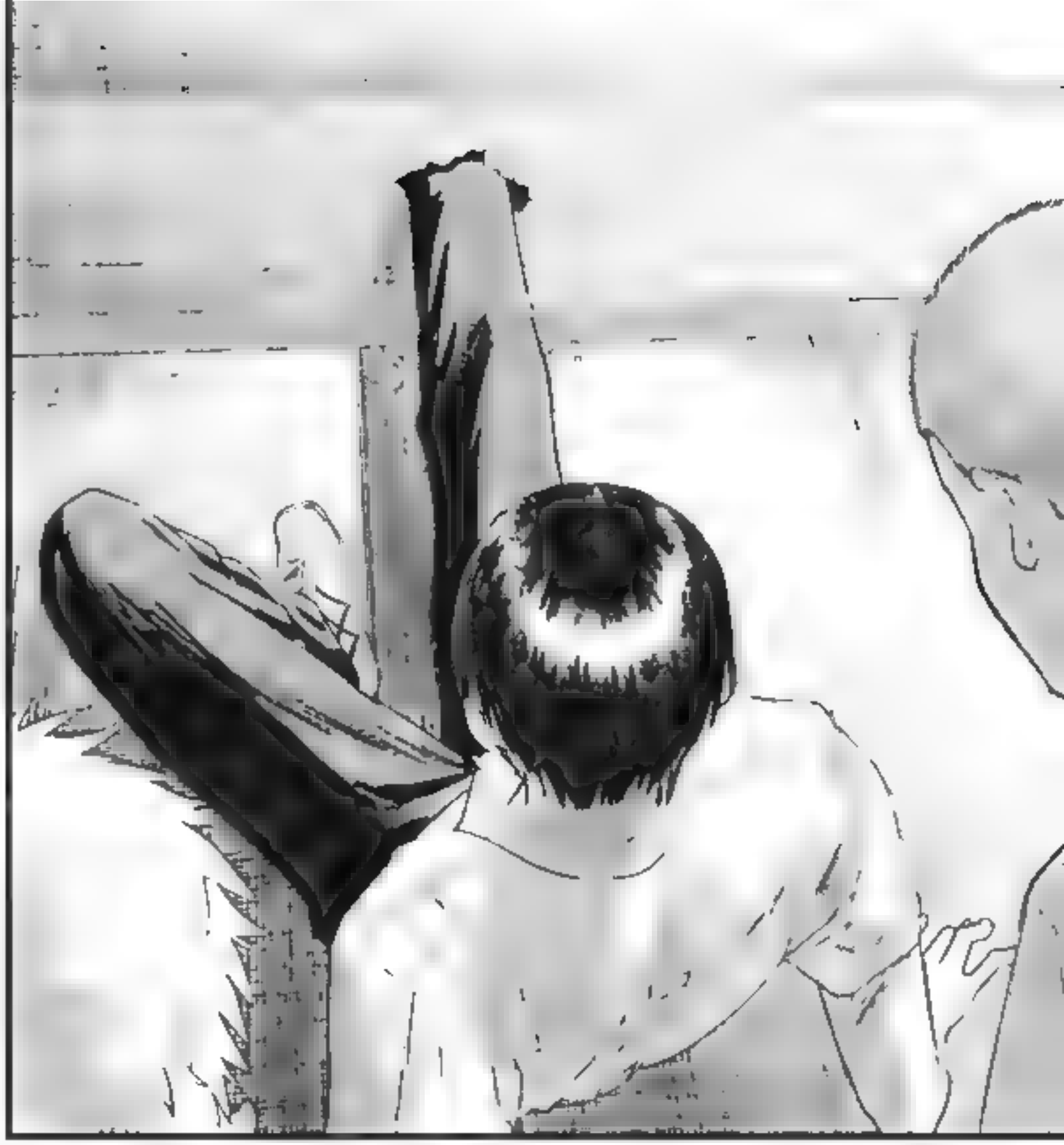


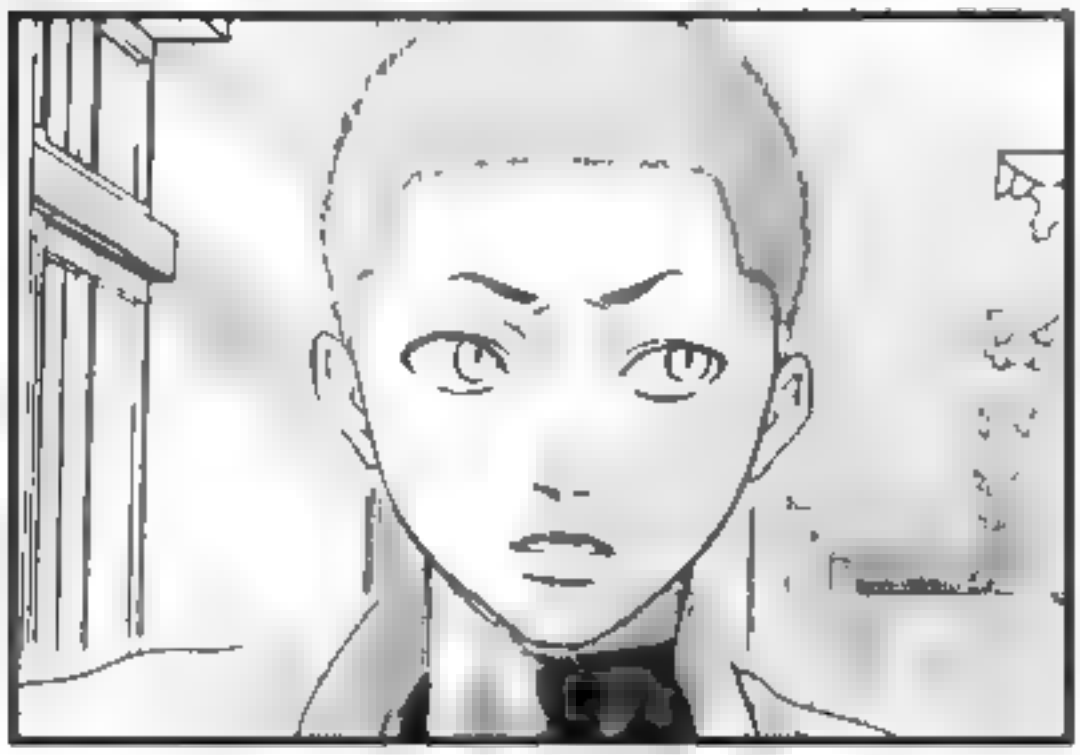


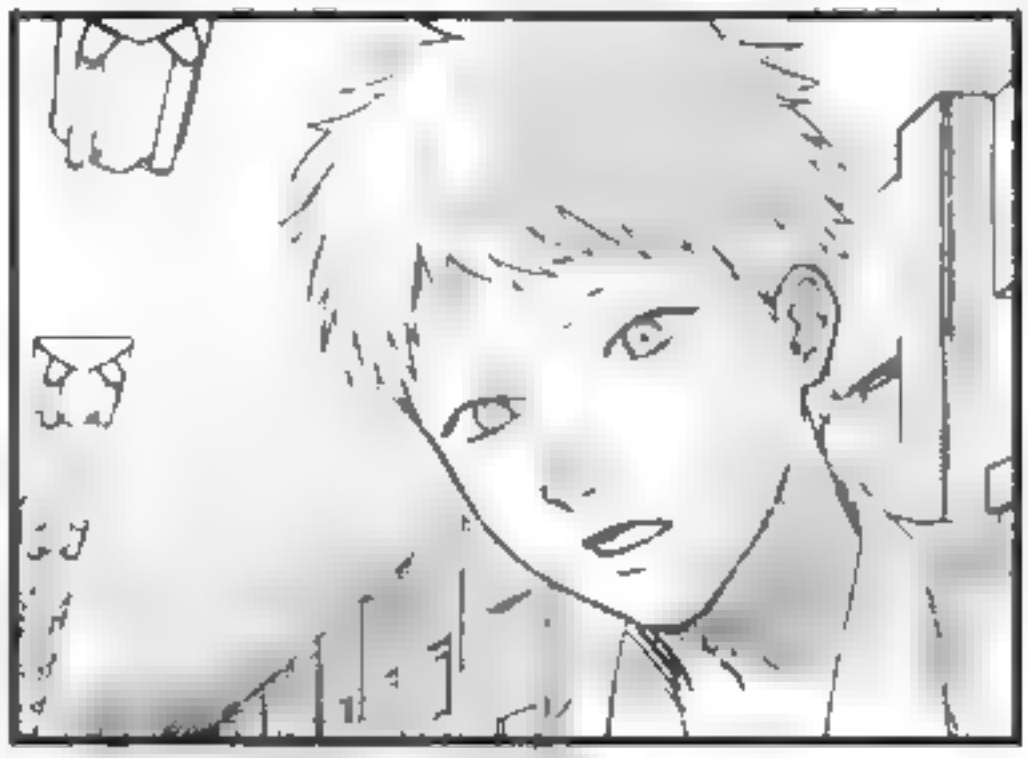


WHUNK


TUG
TUG







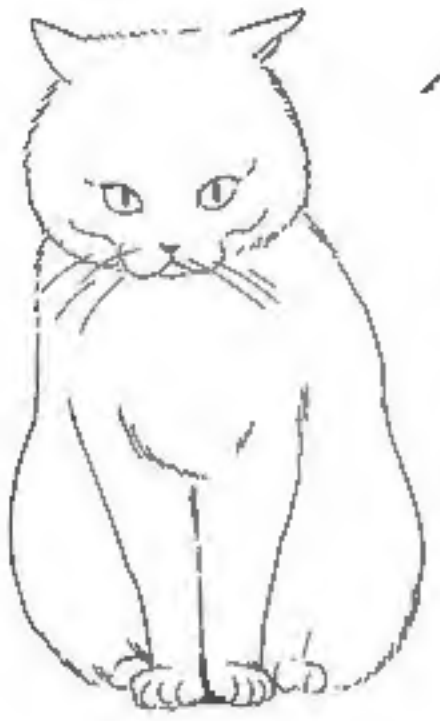
GUESS I'LL BE HEADIN' HOME NOW.

THEY SAY THAT WAS THE LOUDEST YOSHIKI HAD EVER RAISED HIS VOICE IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE.

BONUS END

Afterword

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR READING VOLUME 4. IF THE FIRST THREE VOLUMES WERE THE "DAILY LIFE ARC," THEN VOLUME 4 ONWARD WILL BE THE "MYSTERY-SOLVING ARC." WHAT IS THE SETTLEMENT'S SIN, AND WHAT WILL HIKARU AND YOSHIKI DO? IT WOULD MAKE ME HAPPY IF YOU CONTINUED TO FOLLOW THEIR STORY.



MOKUMOKUREN

ASSISTANT:
NOMU

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

SKRSH

SKRSH

SKRSH

Next Volume Preview

Can we stay

like this

forever?

The impurities

aren't the most

dangerous thing

out there...

THE SUMMER

HIKARU

DIED

continues in Volume 5...

THE SUMMER HIKARU DIED

MOKUMOKUREN

4

TRANSLATION: AJANI OLOYE

LETTERING: ABIGAIL BLACKMAN

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